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Quarter Horse Derby

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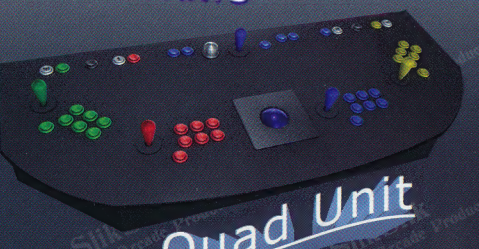

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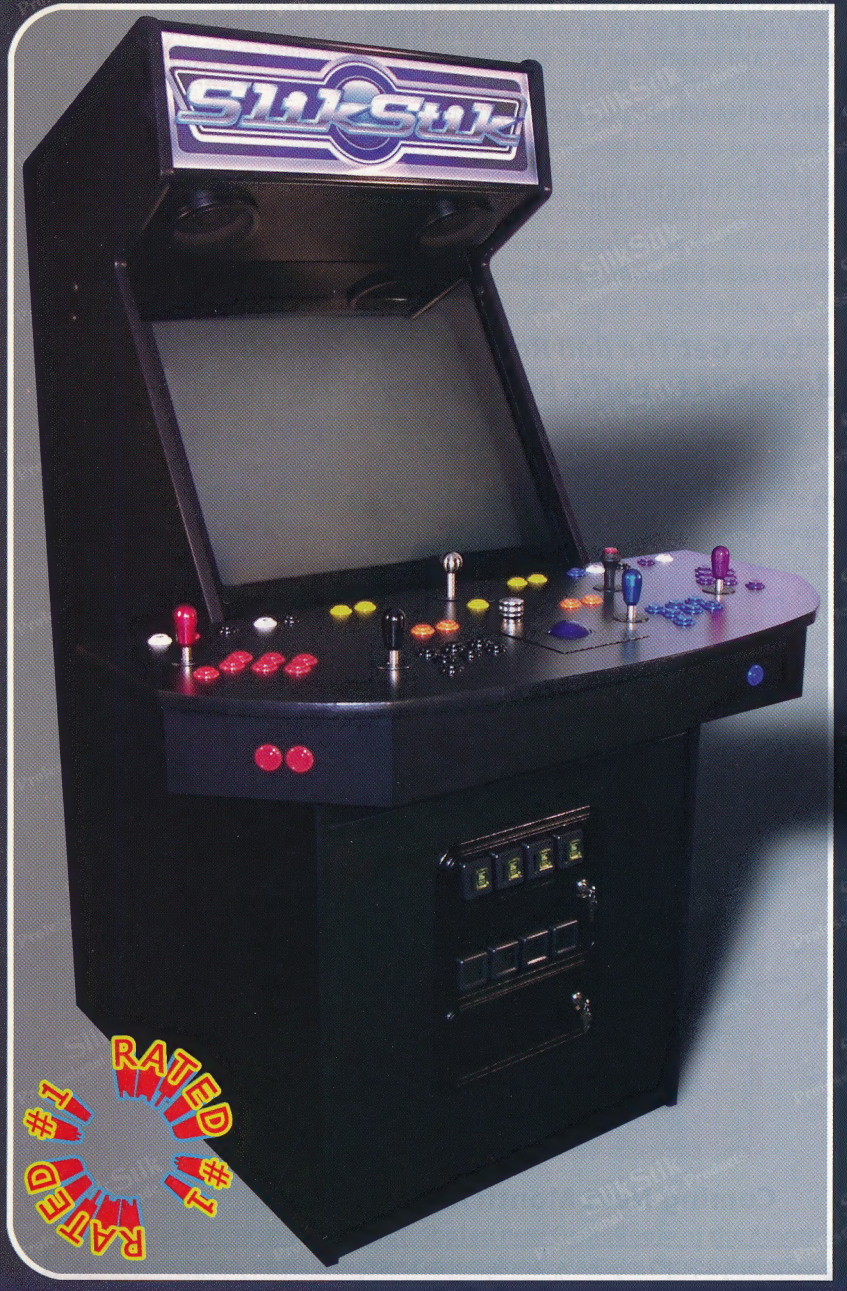

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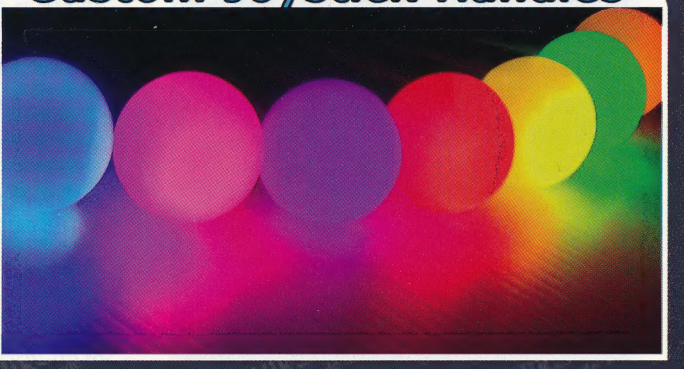

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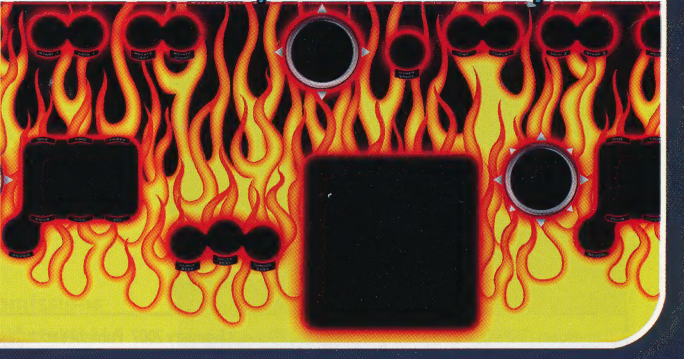

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* 30th-Apr 1st CHICAGOLAND ADVERTISING, SLOT, & JUKEBOX SHOW St. Charles IL Kevin Greco (815) 353-1593
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Let's Get The Ball Rolling: Early Pinball From Bagatelle to Baffle Ball and Beyond by Jimmy Rosen

Coming Next Month in GameRoom!

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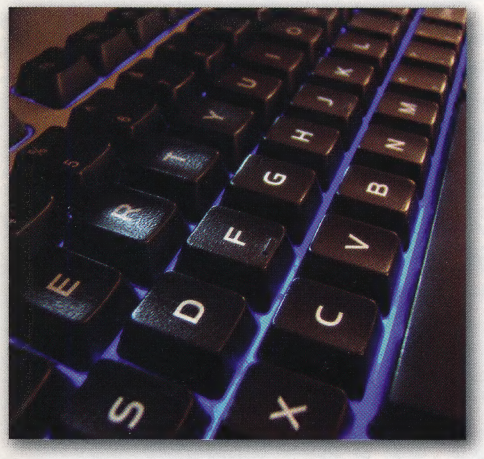

Chaos Central

GameRoom Magazine: Spinning the Retro-Hits from the 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's...

The Mix. It always comes down to the mix. You see, I sometimes imagine this job to be much like being a DJ at a party: my job is to pick the best songs (in this case, articles), and play them in the right order to keep the guests happy. Play a slow song when everyone wants to boogie, and you're going to get complaints from the dance floor.

Well, get your toes tapping, because issue's got a great mix. Things just came together, and there's something for everyone in this issue, from vintage EM coin-op to more modern (if anything in this magazine can be considered modern!) arcade games. Right off the bat we've got a great restoration article from Kevin Keinert on his efforts to revive a *Quarter Horse Derby*, one of two vintage coin-op machines he repaired for Todd MacCulloch. (Part 2 will cover Kevin's restoration of a Kasco *Untouchable* in next month's GameRoom!)

The content mix doesn't end with coin-op collecting and restoration, either—this issue even branches out to cover some unique tangents, such as Melissa Jones' unique and creative retro-carvings, or James Hills' guide to organizing a home game room tournament. We've even got show coverage of the 2006 Chicagoland fall show to serve as a warm-up for this year's spring show! Hopefully there's just the right mix of old and new, something for everyone's game room tastes.

Of course, you've got to have some "golden oldies" in the mix, and we've got the classic GameRoom hits: Kyle Snyder looks at the *Lost Arcade Classic* that is Pooyan, while Rob Craig weaves one of his *Tales of the Silverball*, this time about basic pinball repair. David Ellis' *Wayback Machine* looks at why the future of gaming may look very much like the past, and Dan Hower brings us another *TAFA Classic Arcade Flyer*.

A mix isn't a hit however, until it has some contributions from the audience—we've got a great *GameRoom of the Month*, as Scott Elzey shows off his hybrid game room and barn, and in an unexpected blast from the past, I'm happy to bring back *Confessions of a Coin-Op Addict*, with Scott Gerdeman laying bare his coin-op-lovin' soul.

Well, enough talk: Crank up the speakers, put on your favorite album (be it vinyl, plastic, or bits & bytes), and rock out to another great issue of GameRoom Magazine!

The Game is Never Over,

Kevin Steele, Editor

P.S.: Thanks to everyone who contributed new GameRoom of the Month submissions since my last plea, as well as your Confessions of a Coin-Op Addict! It's a good start, but to keep these columns going, I'm going to need more submissions (yes, it's never enough, is it?). Please send your game room photos and stories, or a personal photo and your confession, to info@gameroommagazine.com, or mail them to GameRoom Magazine, PO Box 33490, North Royalton, OH 44133-0490. Thanks in advance!

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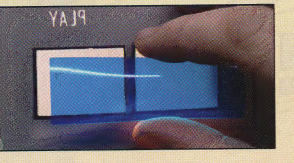

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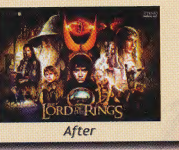

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Back in the 50's, about 1957 or 58, a malt shop in Hazel Park, Michigan got a jukebox that showed videos of kids dancing to the songs that were playing. I think the thing was called Scopetone, Do you have any knowledge of a jukebox that played videos in the 50's? It was only in the soda shop for a short time so maybe it was a prototype. A early rock start "Jack Scott" who had a hit was from the town. This has bugged me for years as i have never heard of anyone who has seen this device, I know it was there and it worked, seems it was way ahead of its time.

John D Shepherd

John, you are indeed right — it was called a "Scopitone," and this large device played videos on a selection of 16mm film reels. The world's first "video jukebox," the Scopitone was designed in France from surplus WWII parts! We actually carry a number of DVD collections of these old music films on our web site in the Jukebox section! (www.gameroommagazine.com)

Ed: I received the following email after letting Jason and Melissa Jones know that their artwork would be featured on this months' cover. Warms my heart to know there are gamers out there who are this enthusiastic!

Kevin, of all the good things that have happened in my life, I can't remember anything affecting me this way that is good. I'm still in shock. It is eerie man I just don't ...I mean I can't understand. Melissa and the kids think the cover is GREAT but I know they don't understand why it is affecting me this way. It is something to do with the whole Donkey Kong thing...and our new relation to it and all the memories of it over the years... and and how I have always wondered what happened to the game and it's creator and it felt like it was lost forever. Then MAME came around and I was in heaven again. Then at BYOAC I realized that the person who created the game was actually a real person and I learned his name and watched him on the CNBC special. I hope that he sees the magazine, and that it makes him smile. I really do man. How cool would it be? I could die a happy man then knowing that I was somehow involved in making Miyamoto smile once. Also, if I could ever meet that guy...I wouldn't know what to do...I would break down. I would cry man.

Thanks! I'm completely and thoroughly awestruck right now man!! It is almost like I died and went to heaven just now...

Jason "Donkey Kong" Jones

I am writing to you to convey my outrage and disgust at the picture on page 55 in the December 2006 issue of GameRoom magazine. It was highly inappropriate to display a picture of a woman with no underwear on. Your review of the video was more than enough to warn your readers that the woman had no underwear on – there was no reason to print a picture of it as well. You call the video "amateur" – I think your magazine looks very "amateur" with content like this. I cannot imagine I am the only woman who subscribed to GameRoom, but if I am, it's okay - now you will have an all-male audience because I will no longer be reading your magazine – there are plenty of other gaming and pinball magazines out there that do not include pornography and understand that half the gamers in this country are women.

Oh, and one other note – the article "GameRoom of the Month" did not make a bit of sense. The transition from page 46 to page 47 reads " I started reading the local newspaper and decided to skim even more complicated than these old ones", I thought to myself. "

Do you edit articles before you print them? Or is that just part of being an "amateur" magazine?

Sara

Sara, I'm truly sorry that the photo offended you—I tried to pick a picture that was as inoffensive as possible, but it looks like I didn't succeed. As far as the error in the GameRoom of the Month article—you're right. Due to a last minute picture swap, several paragraphs of Joe Johnson's excellent article were cut out. Due to my attending PinExpo, I had a rushed production schedule, and as a result there were several mistakes in the December issue, including misspelling Joe's last name (sorry, Joe!) A corrected version of December's GameRoom of the Month is available online at www.gameroommagazine.com

Just wanted to let you know that I have renewed for another year. If it was in the budget, I'd renew for 5 or 10 years. I know I'll be here as long as you are!

Congrats on the great work you've been doing. The magazine looks better than ever. No disrepect to Tim, but it's only since you've gone to the glossy page format that I now leave it out on my coffee table when we have visitors. It it a "real" magazine now, and friends and family who come over think it looks really cool.

Again, keep up the good work. My new year project is a MAME cabinet to go hand in hand with the game room. Can't wait!

Dave Gallant

I've been really negligent in writing to you about the magazine, but have really wanted to. After each and every issue I tell my husband how much more I enjoy the magazine and all of the changes you have made to it. I was shocked when I read some of the letters you posted with such negative feedback about the magazine. It's no easy job that you have, and to make changes is always a risk. But I really believe that the risks you've taken are of value to the magazine, and the entire coin op hobby.

Have a great New Year, and thanks again for taking all of the chances on the magazine. I love it!

Lynnae Clark

Keep up the good work at Gameroom! Although I enjoyed Gameroom under Tim's guidance, it's nice to see articles on more

than just pinball and video games. As I'm primarily a collector of antique slot machines/trade stimulators/arcade machines, I've enjoyed the articles on slots, pachislos, traffic lights, etc. The wide variety of articles really makes Gameroom appeal to a broader audience.

I did have a couple of comments for Rodney Henderson for his article on "Buying your First Slot Machine". It was an interesting article. But believe it or not, Rodney, the slot machine world doesn't begin and end in Nevada. I've been collecting slots for over 25 years, and there's plenty of great collectors and dealers here in the midwest, not to mention all along the east coast and California. The Chicagoland show has several dealers from whom I've bought electromechanical slots, as well as the older mechanical slot machines. I don't doubt there's plenty of experienced slot machine distributors in Nevada, due to that state's long legalized gambling history. But a person can get great slot machines from other dealers outside of Nevada. In addition, I've had good luck with eBay as long as you pay attention to the rating of the seller, and exercise due diligence to ensure you're dealing with one of the many experienced collectors or dealers from around the US. I noticed that you don't below to C.O.C.A., the Coin-Operated Collectors Association. This group has a strong group of slot machine collectors and dealers from around the US, and in fact, the world who have extensive collections. Join COCA - I think you would learn a lot and meet some great people.

Kind Regards, Sal Mazzeo

As a long time subscriber I am just glad you don't claim to be "The World's #1 Magazine For Coin-Op Collectables" as used to be the banner of this magazine. How about spending more effort on real content and less on flashy look and feel. How about a good restoration article or coverage of something built before the invention of the transistor? Reading the recent slot machine "article" leads me to believe the only machines anyone should buy require electricity and are bought from a high priced dealer with a store.

Disappointed,
Jon Huppenthal

Kudos and congrats. I have been a coin op collector since 1978, I have over 200 asst slots/arcade/coke/pinball/gum/vend/jukebox (obviously a obsessive compulsive personality) never happy with one of anything!

I have subscribed to everything in print since 1979 and have seen a number of mags fail miserably. I have all the gameroom issues back to the Cooper days and throughout the Ferrante regime. When I heard of the new ownership I said "Oops, here goes another one." Boy was I wrong you have really taken the bull by the horns and made GR a real 1st class pub. I particularly appreciate your coverage of all aspects of coin op collecting, not just limited to jukes or video. This definitely builds a stronger readership. As far as the look and content there is little I can say other than super dooper!! The 1st coin op pub I got was a 2 page xeroxed sheet in 1979 that a SD collector put out for a while. Since then I have subscribed to everything and was once photographed and interviewed.

I can only say thank you and please keep up the good work, I for one appreciate it. Only one thought. Coin op collectors for reasons I can t explain seem to gravitate toward automated music, ie, Edisons, Victors, player pianos, music boxes, nickelodeons. I have over 25 of them. If you can find a writer, an occasional article on this area may have appeal to others as well. I am also a member of the musical box society and they have several thousand members. This may be a potential source for additional subscribers for you. The San Felipo collection in Chicago and the Millhaus collection in FL are perfect examples. They are an interesting blend of both coin op and automatic music. Just a thought. One last item. I particularly enjoy articles about the hunt and the find. With so few out there it is great to see that some collectors are still finding lost relics. I also in the past enjoyed articles about foreign collectors. The Brits and Aussies are into this and it is interesting to hear their slant. Perhaps you can make a connection in this area.

Thanks again for your hard work and keep the good stuff coming.

Larry Brown

I want to thank you for the effort you have put into Gameroom - I just re-upped for 2 years a week or 2 ago. You are in a tough situation trying to please so many different factions (pins, vids, jukes, etc) but even if the articles aren't my thing, I still read all of them.

I would like to see an occasional 'hands-on' of how someone restored a particular game, whether it is a video, EM pin, juke, SS pin or an old EM arcade game. I think a guy like Clay Harrell would be perfect for it. If he could do one of those even quarterly, it would be a great addition to your magazine.

I loved the news that you will be making the old issues available on disk! Any idea of how much each disk will cost? Also, while you are doing the conversions, it would be great if you could substitute color pics for any B&W ones wherever possible. It is a lot easier on the eyes...

Anyway, thanks for your hard work. The change to full color glossy format has been outstanding. Best wishes for your future success.

John Babiarz

Thanks for the kind words, everyone! For those of you who would like to see more vintage coin-op coverage, I'm happy to announce that this issue includes the first of a string of new articles focusing on EM game restorations and much more—look for an article on early pinball machines by Jimmy Rosen in next month's issue!

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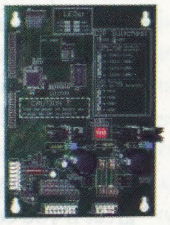
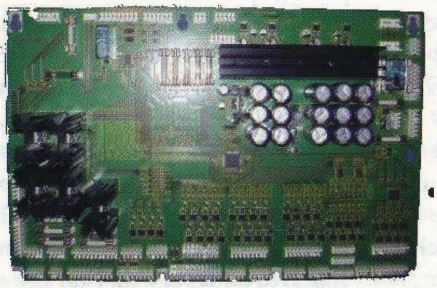
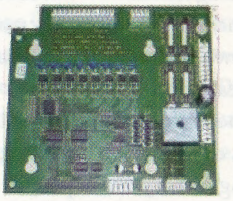


Dot Matrix Controller Board (Replaces A-14039, A-14039.1)



Power Drive Board - replaces A-12697-1, A-12697-2, A-12697-3



Replacement for Fliptronic I+II Board A-15028, A-15472.1

JUST IN! WPC-95 Replacement Power Driver-Boards A-20028

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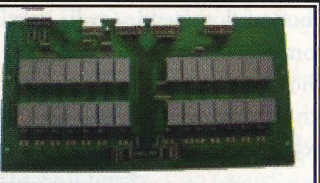

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GameRoom News

Compiled by James McGovern

Twin Galaxies Goes Hollywood!

Press Release

The last place you'd expect to find the video-game capital of the world is Ottumwa, Iowa—but in 1982, this tiny town's Twin Galaxies arcade served as the shining beacon of pixilated pop culture, attracting the best of the best in the highly competitive world of arcade video gaming.

It was no fluke that eccentric arcade owner Walter Day became the official scorekeeper for the video-gaming industry, a mammoth task that he and head referee Robert Mruczek still oversee today via the Twin Galaxies international scoreboard. The arcade itself closed its doors in 1984, but not before Day gave some of the very best players to ever wield a joystick their 15 minutes of fame. Officially recognized as the "video game player of the century" is Billy Mitchell, who in 1999 became the first and only person to achieve a perfect score in the game of Pac-Man (3,333,360, in case you are wondering). He and other gaming superstars are an arcade owner's worst nightmare, able to play for hours, even days, on a single quarter.

Culminating with the nationally televised 1982 Video Game World Championships, director Lincoln Ruchti takes us on a wild ride through the lives of the first arcade celebrities, resulting in an eye-popping collage of retrogaming goodness. While the perspective on video gaming that Ruchti gives us is insightful, the colorful characters that he unearths along the way are this film's true treasure. — Adam Montgomery

More information can be found at:

http://festival.sundance.org/filmguide/popup.aspx?film=4648

X-Arcade Now Offering Dual Blank Control Panels

by Mitch Gerson

Many of you know I love X-Arcade and their products. I especially like them because they're so easy to modify and are great entry level products for those just getting into retrogaming as a hobby.

I have learned all that I know about wiring, controllers, PCBs and buttons from taking apart my X-Arcade controllers and tweaking them throughout the years. Now X-Arcade has released a product which I personally begged for over the years.

You can now purchase one their extremely well built 2 player housing units with no buttons, joysticks, or PCBs for just $29.99.

As per their website---

Passionately designed to deliver thousands of hours of entertaining and fun experiences for your family and friends--this X-Arcade™ Dual blank control panel allows you to customize and build your own arcade experience in the comforts of your own home.

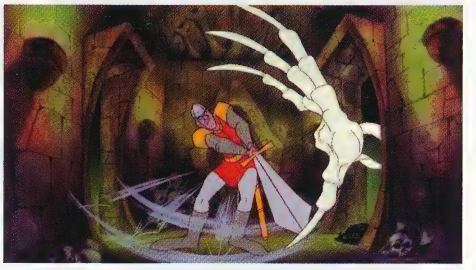
For classic and fighting game building desiring to create their own customized arcade joystick or arcade machine; pick up the most highly-rated and professional panel available. Add any encoder board for PC/console support OR wire your Xbox 360 Gamepad for real arcade play on Xbox 360 Live.

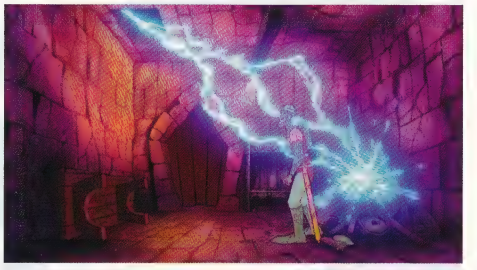
All you need to do is wire your PCB and add your favorite off-shelf joystick/buttons. Happ Ultimate, Competition, 360 & Sanwa supported.

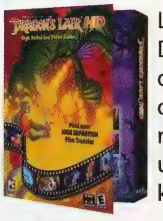
In my opinion, this is a great way to get a professionally built control panel customized just the way you want it, with the arcade controls and interface of your choice!

http://www.x-arcade.com/mame-arcade-stick.shtml

Dragon's Lair – Bigger, Better, Wider!







Laser Disc junkies rejoice! Digital Leisure has released a digitally re-mastered version of the classic laser game starring the valiant, if not a little unlucky (at least when I play) knight, Dirk the Daring.

The incredible animation by Don Bluth has been updated to display in widescreen for high definition retrogaming goodness., and the original soundtrack has also been updated to bellow your demise or victory in glorious 5.1 surround sound. This update brings Dragon's Lair into the modern HD television era.

You'll need more than a vintage computer to project this in your home theater though as you can see by the minimum requirements.

Minimum System Requirements :

Windows XP, 2.4 GHZ Processor, 384 MB RAM, 64 MB GFX Card, DVD-ROM Drive, 1024x768 min screen res. 5.1 Surround Sound audio card required for surround playback, standard audio cards will output re-mastered stereo audio.

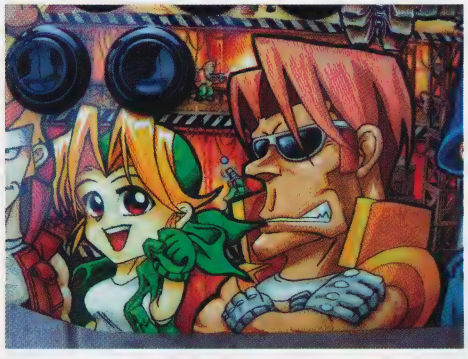
This updated version is available in PC-DVD ROM format from Digital Leisure for $49.95.

http://www.digitalleisure.com/contents/DVDRom_games.htm#dlHD

Hand Painted Metal Slug Control Panel

by Nick Greeley

This beautiful piece of work was created by a Build Your Own Arcades Controls (BYOAC) member known as "Ardnut." Hand painted over a period of time, Ardnut has put together a beautiful one-of-a-kind artwork piece that probably will not be duplicated anytime soon.



Here's a guy who takes detail to the next level when it comes to control panel artwork. The thought and care put into this project makes it top notch in my book. I can't believe all the different characters and scenes he painted into the background!

This close up gives you a little better view of the detail that Ardnut put into his work. He even has scenes from the games painted in the background of the control panel including underground areas, caverns, and the Metal Slug itself. You can join the discussion about this beautiful control panel over at BYOAC or head over to Ardnut's website to view some of the great close-up photos he took and admire the detail that went into this labor of love.

BYOAC Thread - http://forum.arcadecontrols.com/index.php?topic=61137.0

Artist's Website – www.ardnut.co.uk/mslug/

Family Guy Pinball Coming Soon

by Kevin Steele

Stern's next pinball, due out this month, is The Family Guy, based on the cancelled-and-then-revived Fox cartoon.

The playfield, designed by famed pin designer Pat Lawlor, looks to be jam-packed with pinball goodies, including a complete mini-pinball in the upper right-hand corner.

Note that I said *mini-pinball*, not *mini-playfield*. This is a complete (and separate) pinball machine within a pinball machine, complete with a mini ball and mini flippers, drop targets, ramps, and more. It even has its own rules!

As is appropriate for a show known for its "edgy" appeal, the machine will ship with Adult, Moderate, and Family settings.

We've got a great interview with Pat Lawlor and more details (and photos) on the Family Guy pinball coming up next month!

Accessible Pinball Machines and More

by Mitch Gerson

I came across this company in a NYT's article this past weekend and thought I would share what they're up to in the world of accessible pinball.

The company is called "U CAN DO, INC." and they specialize in adapting arcade machines and machines for easy use if you have a physical disability.

There have been some very generous folks in our hobby over the years that have attempted to help folks to get their gaming fix if they are disabled and this company has literally made it their mission.

As per their website-

"It is sometimes the smallest of things that creates the biggest divide between people. The inability to share a common pleasure, to participate in a game so many play at with little conscious effort; this can be all it takes to bring on the label of "different" and "strange", labels which keep people apart.

U CAN DO is a bridge across that gap. For the first time, individuals who previously could only participate in one of America's great past times as spectators, can play -- and compete -- as equals. In playing together, people on both sides of the divide -- young and old, men and women -- learn that despite physical differences, we are more alike than different, that we all experience the sense of challenge, of triumph, and of play much the same way. "

I wish them well in this endeavour.

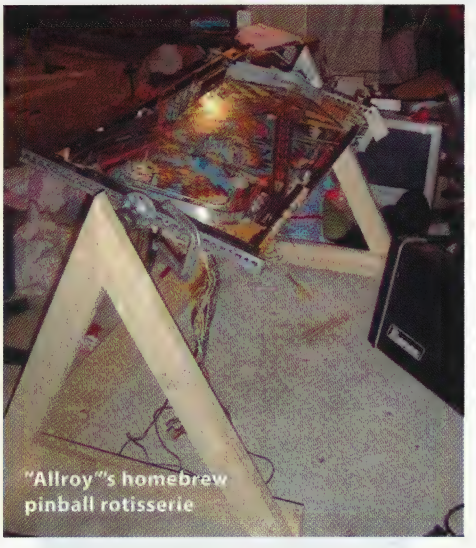
http://www.ucandocentral.com/home.html

Make Your Own Pinball Rotisserie

If you have ever worked on a pinball playfield for any length of time you know that getting to the nooks and crannies can be downright frustrating if the playfield is in place or even propped up on blocks on your workbench. One solution is the Pinball Rotisserie, a frame and axle that allows you to spin your work as needed. They used to be available for $250 from A Bit of Leisure, but are now sold out!

A Bit of Leisure's pinball rotisserie

Well one of our friends who calls himself "Allroy" on the innernets decided he wanted one but was too cheap and unwilling to dish out the dough for the pre-made version. A quick trip to Lowe's and a couple hours work in a VERY messy workroom paid off and Allroy now has the object of his restoration leisure.



"Allroy"'s homebrew pinball rotisserie

His project site is down as of this writing, but word is you will see this how-to soon in GameRoom Magazine!

A Bit of Leisure - http://abitofleisure.com/rotisserie.html

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We're always looking for exciting game room news and we need your help!

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When a former NBA star (who is now a sports announcer) contacted me to repair two of his arcade games, I was honored. When I learned how rare the games were, I decided I had to share this experience with GameRoom readers. — Kevin Keinert

The MacCulloch Restorations

Part 1: Quarter Horse Derby

by Kevin Keinert

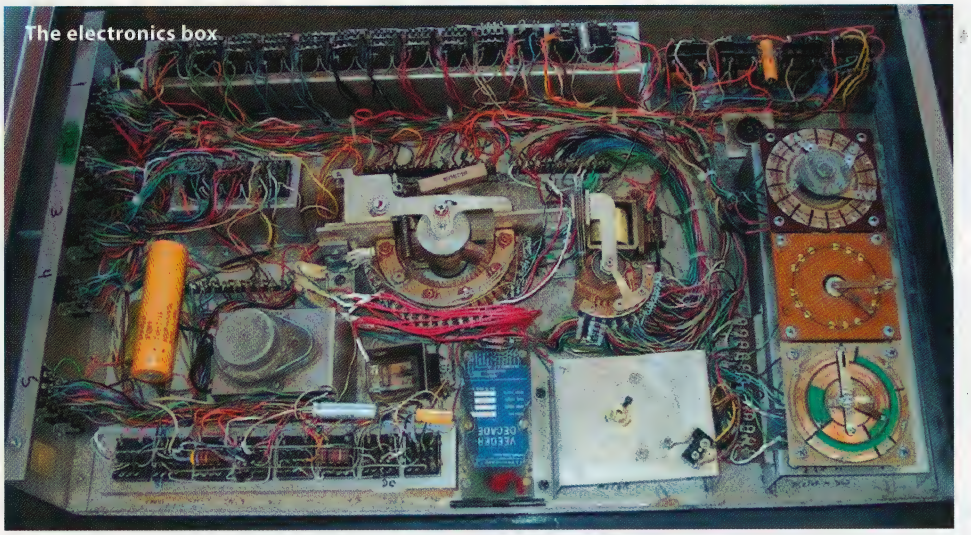
Todd MacCulloch played for the Philadelphia 76ers from 2000 until 2003. He is now a Radio Color Analyst for the 76ers. He contacted me after seeing pictures of my Kasco *Untouchable* on my website at www.keinert.com. He asked if I could repair his *Untouchable*. This would require the game to be shipped from his home in Washington State, to my workshop in Santa Maria, California. We talked on the phone and worked out the details for shipment. During the conversation, Todd asked me if I might be able to repair another machine in his collection called the *Quarter Horse Derby,* which was made in the 70s by a company called Games Of Nevada. I was not familiar with this game but told him that I would be happy to inspect it and provide an estimate to repair it. So a few weeks later, North American Van Lines pulled up to my door and dropped off these two games. I looked them over, sent Todd an estimate, and he authorized the repairs.

I decided to tackle the Quarter Horse Derby first. This machine is a cross between an arcade game and a Las Vegas style payout gambling device. For the drop of a nickel, nine mechanical horses line up at the starting gate then patiently wait for the player to wager his bet on the nag of choice. Multiple coins can be inserted and bet on multiple horses if desired. When all the bets are in and the Start Race button is pressed, the player is treated to a fully animated horse race which consists of nine fillies that gallop around an oval track, jockey for position, each pulling ahead of the other then falling behind again, seemingly at random, until the home stretch where one of the horses pulls ahead of the others to become the clear victor in The Run for the Roses. When the winning horse hits the finish line, the other horses stop moving until the next game is started. This allows all spectators to clearly see who won the race. If the player was lucky enough to bet his coin(s) on the winning nag, he is promptly rewarded with the sound of nickels plunking into the payout tray below. The payout for each coin played ranges from three to one hundred nickels. The amount of this payout (called the "Odds") is randomly chosen when the player inserts the first coin and is displayed on a rotating Odds Drum in the headboard of the machine. The machine allows the player to wager up to nine coins

Quarter Horse Derby BackGlass

Author Kevin Keinert works on *Quarter Horse Derby*

Top view of the racetrack



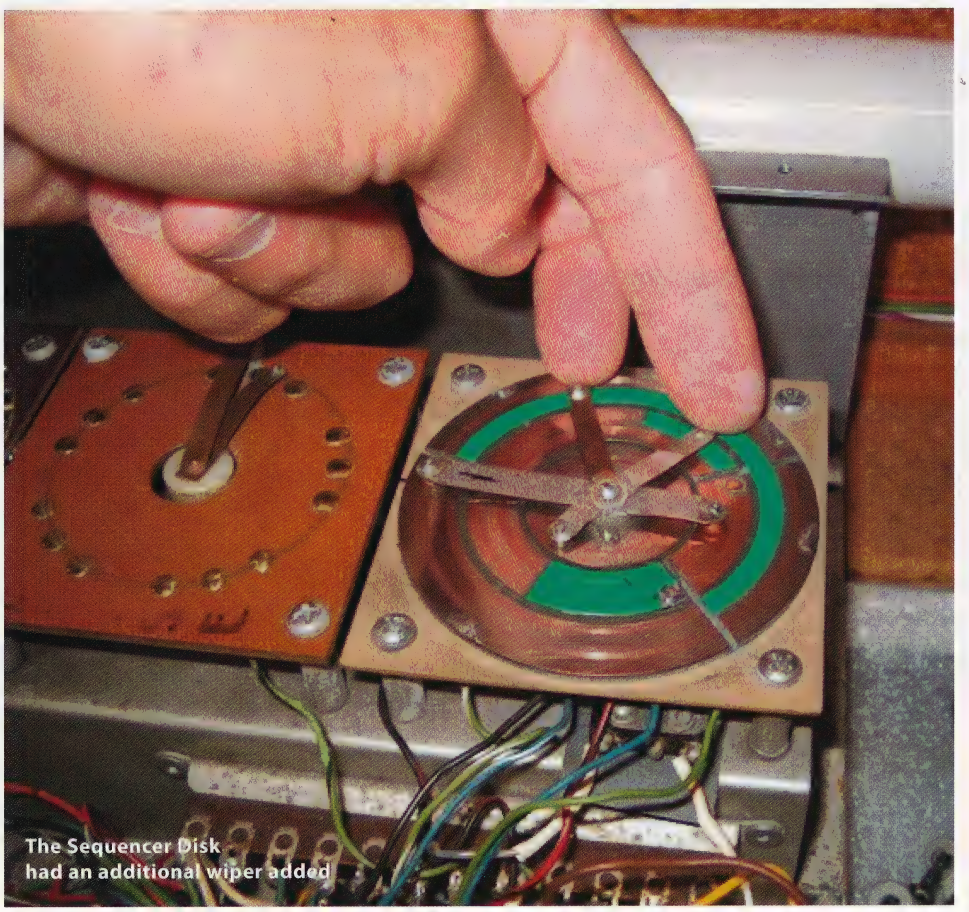
The electronics box

on any horse. If nine nickels are bet on a horse that is displaying 100:1 odds and that nag comes in first, the lucky player wins 900 coins or a cool $45.00.

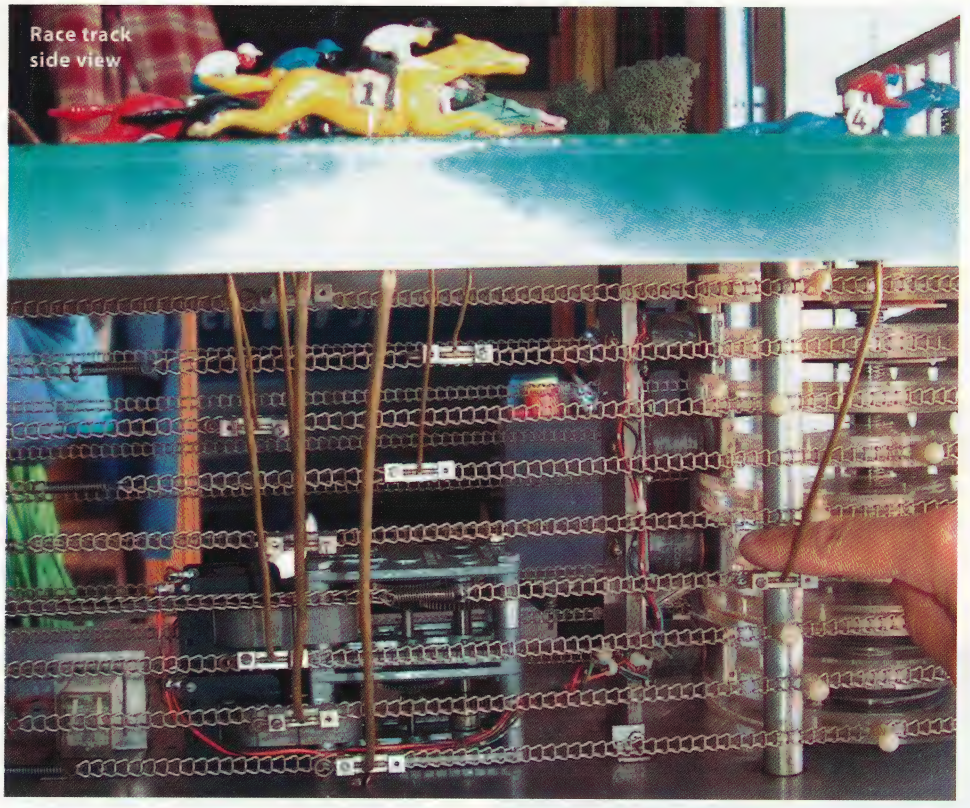
To avoid possible damage, Todd did not ship the backglass. Therefore I don't have a picture of the complete game. However Todd did send me a picture of the glass so I could include its artwork with this article. To start the repair process, I carefully compared the game's schematic to the components and wiring inside the machine. I found that this game had a few modifications performed to it. The most significant change was made in the Starting Gate circuitry. When the first coin is inserted at the start of a new game, all horses advance to the Starting Gate and are stopped by the leading vertical edge of this gate. (the top two pictures on page 18 show the Starting Gate in the closed position with one of the horses fully advanced and waiting at the starting line). The condition shown is the machine at rest just after game play has ended. When all the bets are in and the race is started, a powerful solenoid energizes and swings the gate open so that all horses can begin to move around the track. This solenoid is required to hold the gate open long enough for all horses to complete the first quarter mile, which is around the first curve in the oval track, so that they clear the starting gate. By studying the schematic, I realized that this large solenoid was not original. In fact, the original circuitry consisted of three separate solenoids which were a Gate Kicker Solenoid (to start the gate swinging open), a Rotary Solenoid (completes the gate swing to fully open and latches it in place), and finally a Gate Release Solenoid (closes the gate after the horses have passed it). Apparently, some of this original circuitry had failed in the past and rather than using the correct parts to fix the machine, the repair person chose to replace everything with one giant brute strength solenoid. This change in solenoid circuitry also required changes in the electrical box that controls the entire game, none of which were noted on the schematic. One of these changes was the addition of a wiper blade to the Sequencer Disk which is the main timer that controls the sequence of operations for the entire game. Needless to say, this made the repair a bit more challenging due to the fact that I had to trace many wires and document the differences between the game wiring and the schematic.

For anyone who does electro-mechanical game repair, you will understand that the majority of work needed on this game was the typical cleaning and adjusting of all electrical contacts, then lubricate and adjust all mechanical assemblies. However, there were a few additional repairs that required the use of my lathe and milling machine in my shop. Before I describe these repairs, a

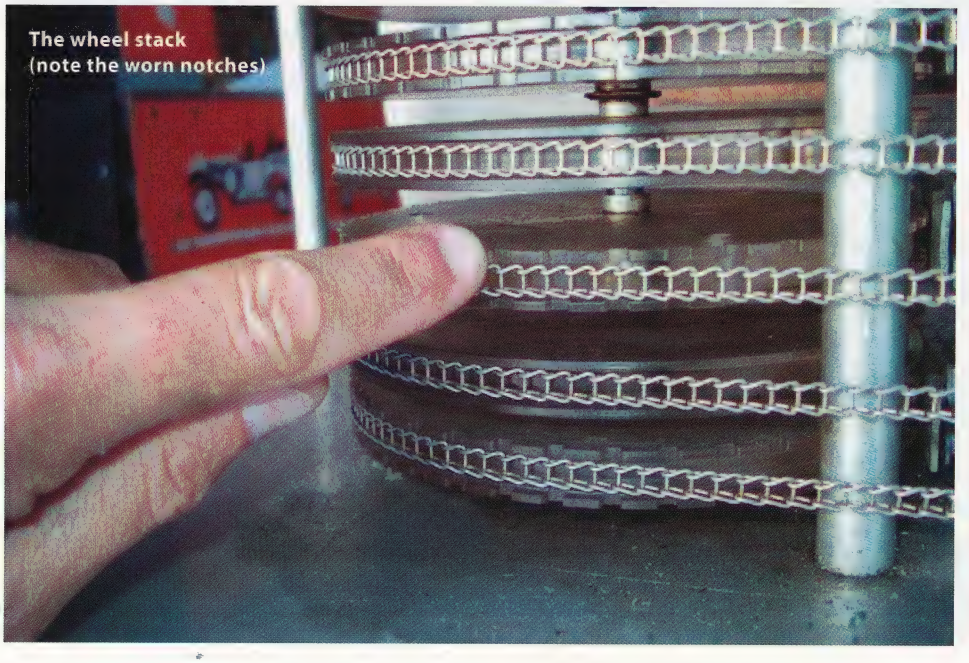
The starting gate circuitry, including the gate solenoid



The Sequencer Disk had an additional wiper added


Race track side view

brief description is needed of how the game is supposed to operate. When the horses race around the track, they actually have a gallop to their movement and they jockey for position. Each horse at random will pull ahead of the others for a short distance, but then slow down and become overtaken by another horse. All horses stay within one half length of each other, so the race seems very close and the winner is hard to predict until the end of the race. Only during the home stretch does the winning thoroughbred pull away from the rest of the pack and hit the finish line first, several lengths ahead of the others. The electro-mechanics that cause this are quite ingenious. Each of the nine horses is connected to a chain under the race track. These chains are connected to a stack of clear plastic Drive Wheels which are all driven together by a two speed double stack motor. One speed on this motor is faster than the other and is used to quickly move the horses to the starting gate when the first coin is played. During the race, the motor toggles back and forth between fast and slow speeds depending on whether the horses are in the straight sections of the race track, or the oval sections of the race track. This speed change during the oval sections of track is necessary to give the horses the appearance of consistent speed at all times.


The wheel stack (note the worn notches)

However, this changing motor speed during the race does not cause the horse's galloping or jockeying rhythm. That motion is caused by Horse Blocking Relay armatures. These arms drop into notches that are cut into the outer circumference of each clear plastic Drive Wheel. In the left photo I am pointing to one of these Horse Blocking Relay arms in the side view of the racetrack, and below I am pointing to the Drive Wheel notches in the photo of the wheel stack. There is one blocking arm for each horse's Drive Wheel. During the race, the double stack motor attempts to turn all nine Drive Wheels in unison which would normally advance all nine horses around the track in a smooth consistent motion. However, the Sequencer Disk controls a circuit that allows the blocking arms to engage the notches and grab onto each Drive Wheel. This grabbing of each Drive Wheel happens in an intermittent and repeating fashion. The double stack motor continues to turn, but as each Drive Wheel is grabbed, the associated horse stops dead in his tracks. When this occurs, the Drive Wheels are allowed to slip on the motor's drive shaft due to leather friction disks that connect each wheel to the drive shaft. The duration of blocking arm engagement is very brief, only about one half second. When the blocking arm retracts and clears the Drive Wheel, the wheel starts to turn again and the horse continues down the track. The frequency at which these Horse Blocking Relays grab and release each Drive Wheel causes the visual effect of the horses galloping as they advance around the track. The jockeying of horse's position (relative to each other) is controlled by a separate disk and wiper assembly inside the electronics box. Only during the last quarter mile of the race (the last straight away before the finish line) does the winning nag emerge from the pack and hit the finish line several lengths ahead of the others. This final sprint to victory occurs when the Horse Blocking Relay of the winning nag is retracted permanently which allows that horse's Drive Wheel to rotate continuously. The other fillies are still being intermittently blocked but the winner takes off at breakneck speed to claim the Triple Crown. As the winning horse hits the finish line, the race is ended by a white plastic knob that is mounted on the horse's drive chain. This knob presses against a vertical bar which is mounted on the leading edge of the Starting Gate. When this vertical bar gets

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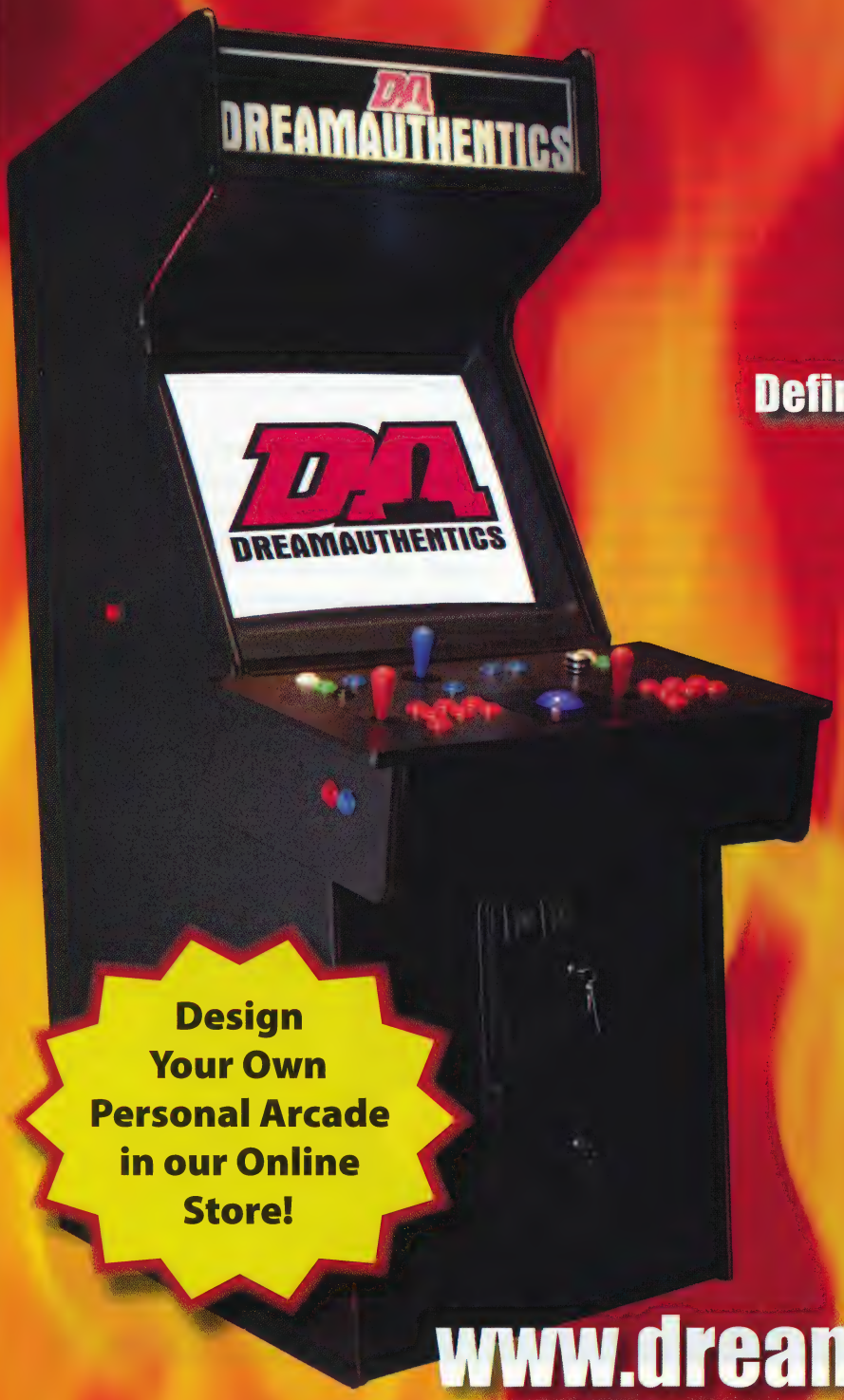

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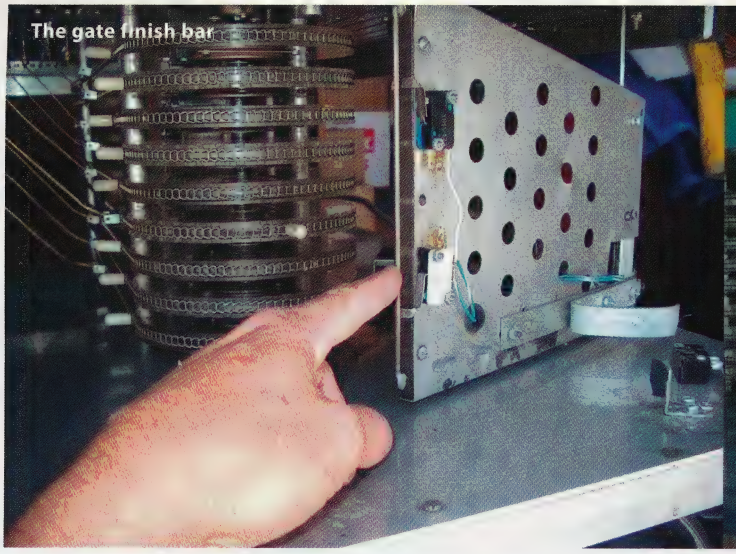
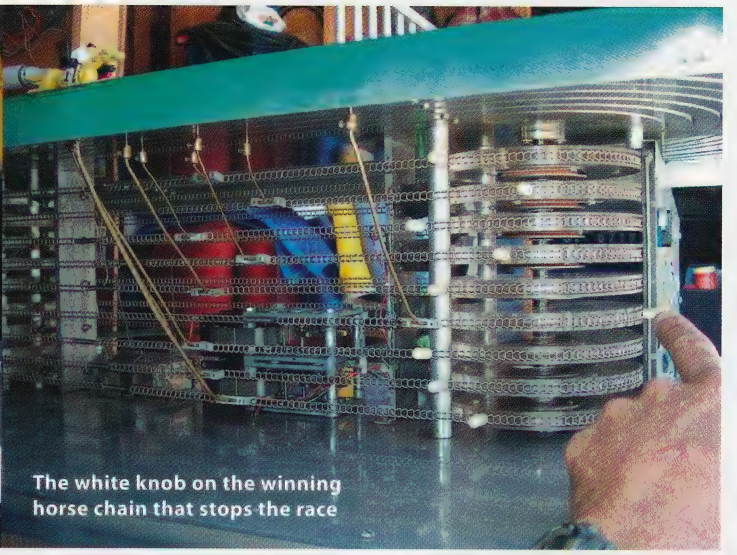

The gate finish bar


The white knob on the winning horse chain that stops the race

moved by a white plastic knob coming into contact with it, a micro switch is closed and the electronics box stops the race.

Now that we have an understanding of how the game operates, I can describe the first major problem that required my attention. Every time this game was played, the horses numbered two and nine would always finish ahead of the others and they would tie for first place. The electronics box was actually picking a random winner each game, but no matter whom the real winner was, horses two and nine always finished first. This problem turned out to be worn notches on the number two and nine Drive Wheels. The notches, which are normally square, were rounded off to the point that the armature of the Horse Blocking Relay did not engage and stop these two horses. The armatures simply bounced out of each notch and allowed these wheels to keep turning. This caused horses two and nine to always pull ahead of the others because they would run the entire track without getting held back by the blocking arms. The solution to this problem was to disassemble the entire Drive Wheel stack and reshape every notch with a hand file. Upon close inspection, I noticed that all Drive Wheels had some amount of wear on their notches, so all nine wheels were reshaped by hand. I do have an indexing fixture on my milling machine, but the amount of wear in these notches did not justify the level of effort required to set up my mill. A quick hand filing of each notch was sufficient.

The second problem to plague this machine was that the horses would stop moving altogether part way through the race. The Sequencer Disk was still turning but all of the stallions were stationary! Tracing the schematic revealed another circuit which includes a star shaped plastic disk and micro switch assembly inside the electronics box whose purpose is to interrupt current flow to the double stack motor and stop the horse's movement, but only for a brief moment, about once each second. Therefore, the complete visual effect of the horse's gallop and their jockeying for position is controlled by two separate circuits which are the Horse Blocking Relays (mentioned previously) and this star shaped disk which the schematic calls the Track Pulser. The problem of the stationary stallions during race time was due to a worn brass bushing in the center of the Track Pulser's star shaped disk. The bushing was loose and the disk would stop turning occasionally. When stopped, this prevented power from reaching the double stack motor and none of horses would move. The original worn out bushing is shown below, along with a piece of brass rod that I used for my repair. I fixed this problem by turning a new brass bushing on my lathe and applying a "straight knurl" pattern to the outside diameter of the bushing so that it would grab and hold the star shaped disk when these two pieces were pressed together. I also reshaped the outside diameter of this plastic star disk because it was not a true circle. Some of the points on the star did not actuate the micro switch.

An interesting aspect of this machine's

Filing the wheel stack notches

The original worn-out bushing on the track pulser disk, and the brass rod used to machine a replacement

The fixed track pulser disk

The "Veeder Decade" ten-position stepping unit

operation is that the winning horse really is picked at random when the first nickel is inserted and the horses approach the starting gate. Inside the electronics box, there is a circuit that consists of two large, multi-stacked rotary switch stepping assemblies (with dozens of steps and hundreds of contact combinations) which is connected to a ten position stepping unit called a *Veeder Decade*.

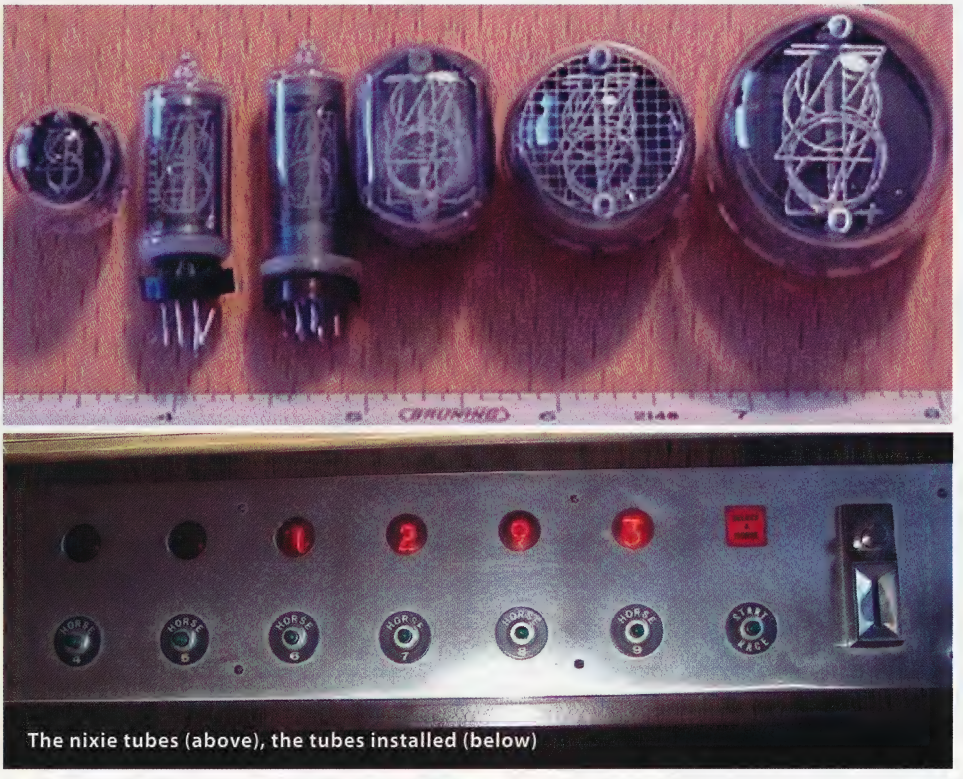
The interconnections between these three devices is the implement by which a winner is randomly chosen. The amount of time in which this circuit is actively pulsing and picking the random winner, is determined by the energy stored in an eighty microfarad capacitor. This capacitor is used to energize the Post Time Relay. The relay supplies 110V 60Hz A.C. power to all three stepping units which causes them to rapidly pulse and advance through many different sets of contact combinations. This rapid pulsing continues until the energy in the capacitor is drained (approximately five seconds). The end result is that a random circuit path through the stepping units is chosen and decoded so that one of the nine horses (the winner) will be allowed to perform the "uninterrupted sprint" during the last quarter mile of the race. This same circuitry also causes the Odds Drum in the headboard to spin and chose new odds at the beginning of each game.

An additional circuit called the Randomizer is constantly changing a resistive load that is placed across the capacitor as it supplies energy to the stepping units and the Veeder Decade. This causes the capacitor to discharge quicker in some cases and slower in others. Therefore, the stepping units will remain pulsing for different lengths of time each time a game is played. The combination of all this circuitry makes the machine a true gambling device because a winner is chosen totally at random before the player places his first bet.

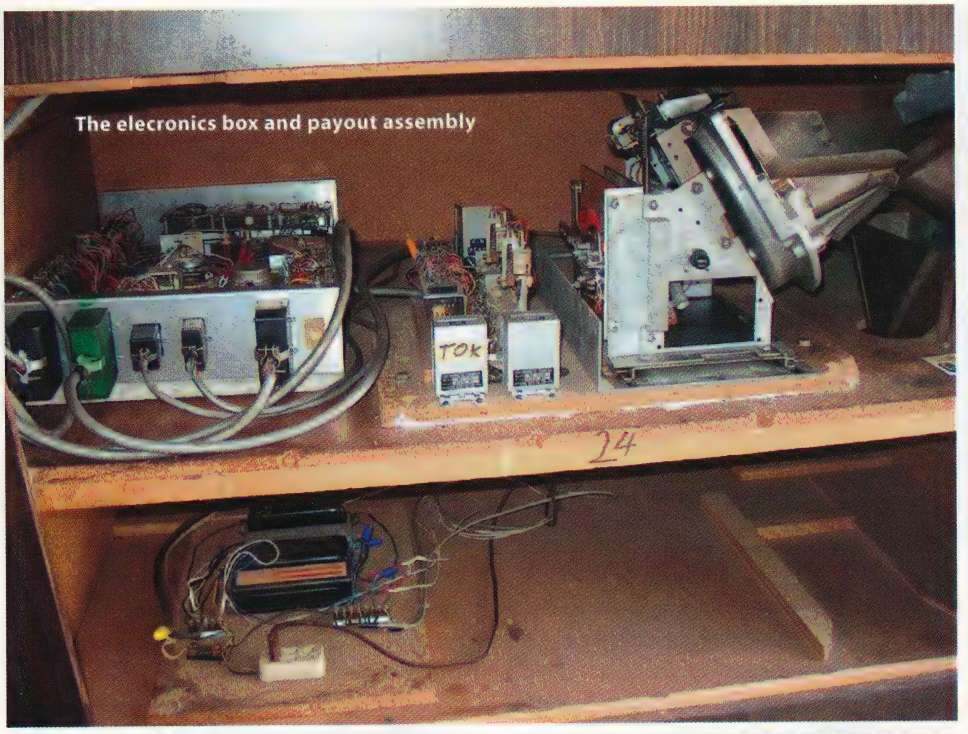
By the way, all of the circuitry in this game, motors, solenoids, relays and the rest, are all powered directly from the 110VAC line power. There is no voltage step down transformer in this machine, so the repair man has to be very cautious when poking around in the guts of this game.

The manufacturer made one particular design choice that really links this machine to the time period in which it was built. The number of coins bet on each horse is displayed on Nixie Tubes, which are miniature vacuum tubes that are filled with neon gas and ten separate "wire form" shapes. Each of these wires is formed into the shape of the numbers zero through nine and is closely stacked next to each other inside the tube. To display a number, high voltage is placed on the desired wire and it causes the neon gas around it to glow which illuminates that wire. The result is a neon red glow indicator of the amount wagered on each horse.

The game designers devised a clever way to reproduce the sound of horse hoofs as their gallop around the track. Inside the electrical box, a wiper and disk assembly exists that has its contacts strategically placed so that as the wiper turns, it touches three contacts in rapid succession, then travels a short distance before touching the next group of three contacts. Each time a contact is made, current flows to a relay that is mounted under the race track. The relay is an ordinary type of relay (like the normal devices that open and close stacks of electrical contacts) except that there are no contacts, just the relay armature



The nixie tubes (above), the tubes installed (below)



The elecronics box and payout assembly

with one end hanging out in the breeze, attached to nothing. When the contacts on the wiper disk are made, the relay energizes and the armature pulls in to smack against the relay coil and produce a "thump" sound. By virtue of the contact spacing on the wiper disk, the relay will produce a rhythmic sound pattern of three thumps, a short pause, then three more thumps, etc. This occurs at a rate that replicates a horse's gallop.

The electronics box and payout assembly are located in the lower cabinet, beneath the race track. Coins are dispensed from a standard hopper that is found in most '70s vintage slot machines. The difference between a slot machine's hopper and the one in this game is the addition of two extra rotary stepping switch units, which are mounted external to the hopper itself. The first stepping unit is used to keep track of how many coins are bet on the winning horse as the player is placing his bets before the race is started. Let's assume for a moment that when the player inserts his first nickel, horse number three is chosen as the winner and the Odds Drum is showing that horse number three will pay 8:1. If the player bets his nickel on horse number three, then the first stepping unit (that I'm pointing to in the photo) will increment one time to the first set of contacts on its wiper disk. Bets on any other horses do not increment this stepping unit, but additional coins bet on horse number three will cause this unit to advance one step for each coin. If the player bets four coins on horse number three before he starts the race, then he will be entitled to a thirty two nickel payoff (8:1 odds times 4 coins bet). All of the '70s style slot machine hoppers operate by incrementing a payout disk that is mounted on the side of the hopper until the correct number of coins is tallied. The hopper in this scenario would normally dispense only eight coins using its attached coin payout disk. However, the player bet four nickels on this winning horse, so the payout disk on the hopper needs to be reset and the eight coin payout process needs to be repeated three more times. That is where the second external stepping unit becomes active. Its job is to track the number of times that the hopper is reset and pays out eight coins. The second stepping unit will increment for each hopper payout and reset sequence. This continues until the position on the second stepping unit matches the position on the first stepping unit. Eight coins per payout sequence multiplied by four repetitions of that sequence equals thirty two coins.

In closing this article, I would like to make an appeal to anyone who may have additional information on the Quarter Horse Derby machine. One collector told me that he believes only fifty of these games were built and that less than fifteen exist today. I am curious to know if these facts are correct and I would like to learn more about the history of the manufacturer, Games Of Nevada. Due to the rarity of this horse racing game and the lack of information that I could find on it, I recorded a one hour long DVD video which shows the game in action and reviews many of the circuits described in this article. I gave a copy to Todd for his use during future repairs, since I doubt he wants to ship this beast 900 miles, each way, every time it needs an adjustment. I have also placed a few AVI files on www.keinert.com that show the Quarter Horse Derby in action. Please feel free to contact me via my website if you have questions or comments regarding this article, regarding my collection, or if by chance you just happen to be an NBA Star–turned Radio Color Analyst who is looking for repair advice on some ultra rare games!

Next Month—Part 2 of the MacCulloch Restorations: *Untouchable*!

The hopper payout advance

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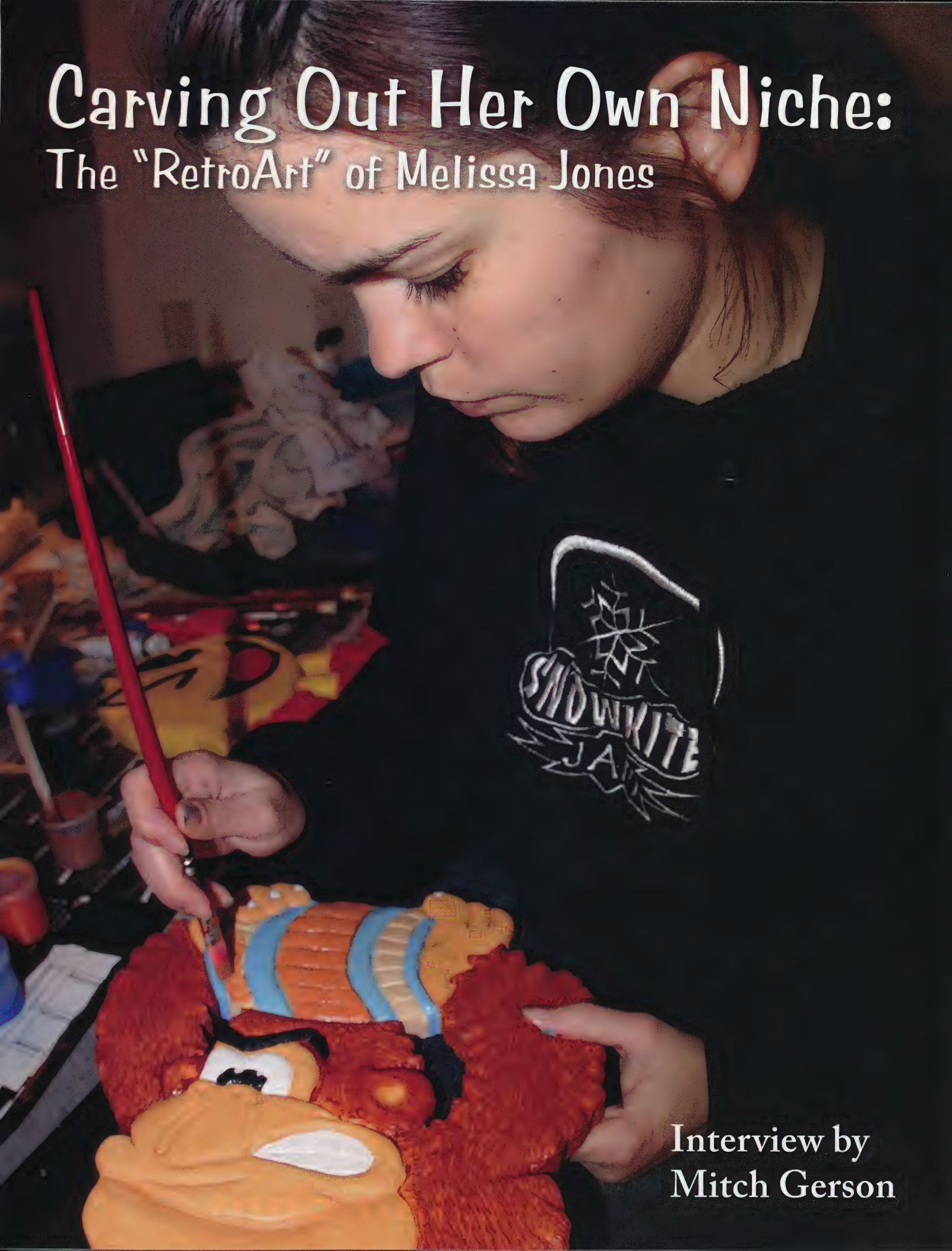
Carving Out Her Own Niche:
The "RetroArt" of Melissa Jones



Interview by
Mitch Gerson

An essential component of the "perfect" game room is themed art. Sometimes, though, you just can't find what you want. Well, if you can't find artwork you like, you can always do what Melissa and Jason Jones did: they made their own decorations, in this case exquisite wood carvings of their favorite video game characters. GameRoom contributing editor Mitch Gerson interviewed Melissa to find out just what inspired them to create their unique game room masterpieces.

Ok. You have finally built the game room of your dreams. All of your games work, they're restored and you're happy. But you've also run out of room for new games.

What's a home arcade owner to do? It's time to *decorate*!

Home arcade decorating seems to me like a natural extension of the whole home arcade "experience." Whether it's neon lights and signs, a commercial trash can, or a change machine, the whole experience just calls for all of those visual cues that make it feel more "authentic".

Now depending on your gaming obsession of choice, I'm sure that your interests may vary from a 50's diner theme to a full blown 80's arcade gaming experience with music and sounds from that era being blasted into your arcade (of course!).

Personally, I have all of the usual decorating items in my game room—vintage 80's arcade game signs, neon signs, gaming tokens and more. But, I'm always on the lookout for that distinctive and unique piece that will make my game room that much more "mine."

I have been fortunate enough to have recently come across "Nice Carvings", which produces very high quality custom wood-carvings of just about any arcade character or arcade related item you can think of!

Many of the photos in this article are of the custom order that I placed recently for art that I will be displaying in my home game room. Within three weeks, Melissa, the artist, had the pieces carved, painted and on their way to me via UPS.

Melissa was kind enough to take out some time and answer a few of my questions regarding her work and future potential projects!

MG: Melissa, I'm really impressed with the quality of the artwork you've created. How long have you been into woodcarving?

I didn't have the tools to carve wood until recently, so actual carving... well, I haven't been doing this for too long. I have been making things out of wood since I was about 10 years old. Growing up in a very poor family in a remote part of Minnesota, there wasn't much to do when I was a child, so I would dig through scrap piles of wood and make gifts for my relatives. I would also whittle things out of sticks and pull bark off birch trees to make things.

MG: What other types of carvings have you done?

I am working on Disney and Dr. Seuss characters for a bookcase as a gift. I am also working on more arcade characters. The ideas for different carvings are endless.

MG: How did your husband Jason get you to work on carvings for his really unique pine arcade machine?

Jason has been wanting to build a arcade game for a while but when he kept looking

Jason Jones cuts out the initial character shape

Pac Man begins to take form

Below: Characters ready for carving
Right: Melissa, in her "space suit," hard at work

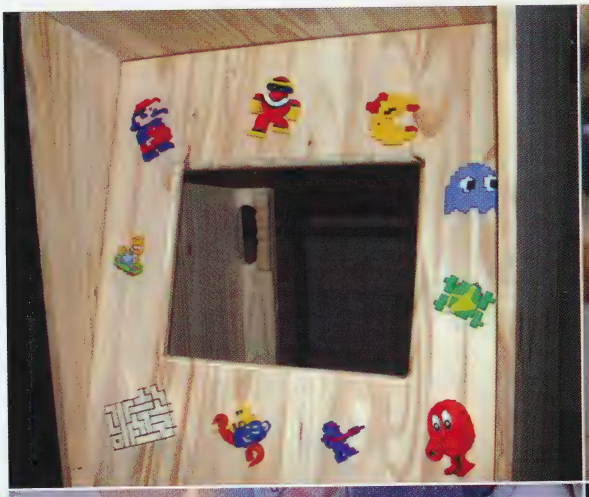
,at particle type board I had to talk him into using real solid wood. I really do not like particleboard. Once he was set on pine he started thinking up ideas for unique side art for his machine. His first idea was wood burning and that soon turned into woodcarvings. When Jason was set on his side art I asked him how he was planning on carving arcade characters on the side of game. He looked at me and said, "I'm not going to, you are". I thought he was crazy, but Jason seemed to have a lot of confidence in my ability to carve wood. So I gave it a try and they turned out better than I could have imagined.

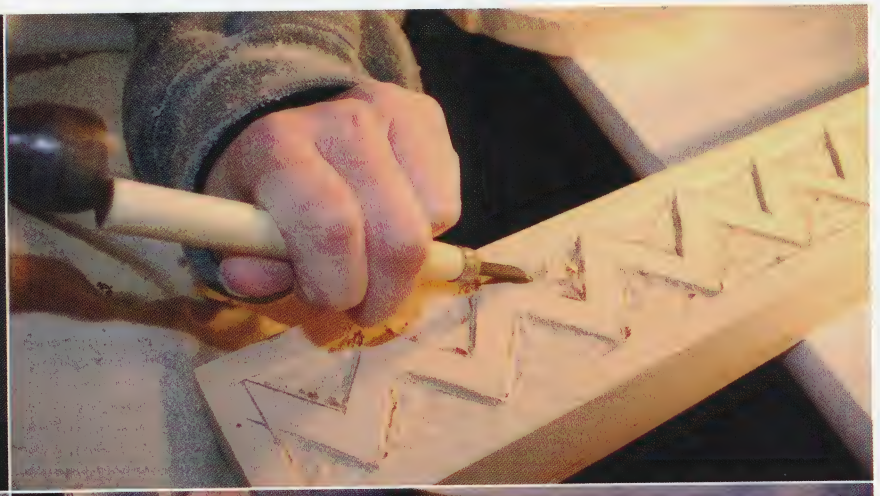
MG: How long does it take to create each piece?

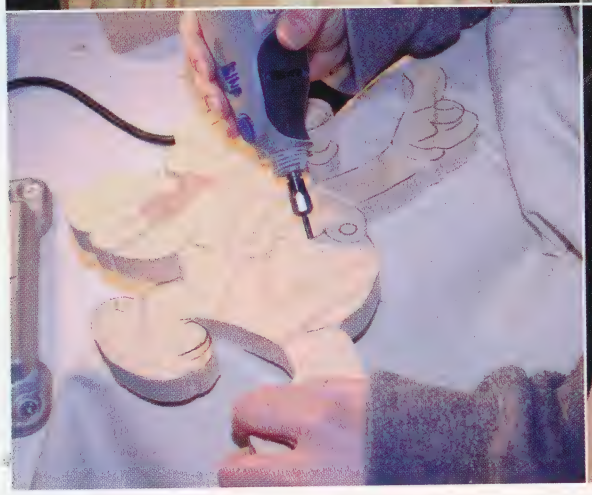
It varies depending on size and detail of carving. If a piece is small and has a lot of detail it might take longer than if it was a little bigger. I would say from the time I start a piece until it is completely painted, really simple designs with very little detail can take about 2 hours. More intricate designs with a lot of detail can take as much as 8 - 10 hours start-to-finish.

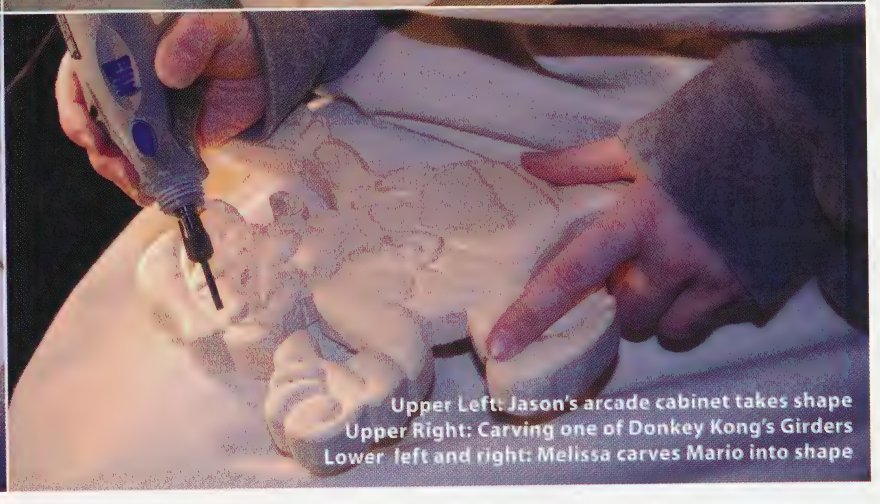
MG: What's the most difficult part of the design/carving process?

I am somewhat of a perfectionist, so I have a hard time saying that a carving is *ever* done. Plus I am not the greatest painter so I get frustrated more with painting vs. carving. I guess carving is more natural for me.









Upper Left: Jason's arcade cabinet takes shape
Upper Right: Carving one of Donkey Kong's Girders
Lower left and right: Melissa carves Mario into shape

MG: What types of tools and paints do you use?
I use a lot of different tools and I am always trying new tools even if they are not meant for woodcarving. I mostly use a Dremel with almost every bit made for it. The paint that I have been using is high-end acrylic artist paint.

MG: From design to the final painting, tell me what steps are involved in the creation of your work.
There is a lot involved in the whole process and would take some time to go through all the steps. I am planning on having something on my web site, maybe even a how-to-video to show people all the details of what goes into these carvings.

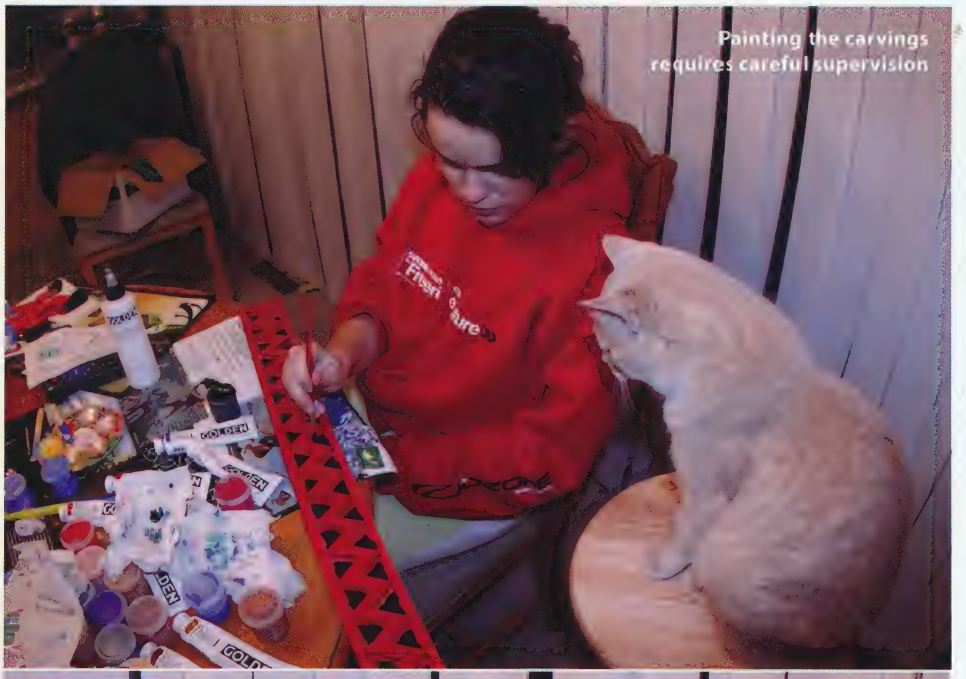
MG: Do you do other types of crafts? Or have you had any special training in the arts or carving in particular?
I took wood shop classes in high school—that is about all the training that I have had. I mostly learn by doing. I like to try a lot of different crafts/ projects. If something seems interesting, I'll try it. So who knows what I will come up with next?

MG: What is your favorite arcade piece created to date?
I would have to say Donkey Kong is my favorite. There is just something about him, you would have to see him in person, and it is like he has come to life in the carving. Donkey Kong's texture and colors are great. Most people have to touch him when they see him for the first time. My second favorite... well, it changes every time I am done with a new carving.

MG: How would someone contact you if they wished to commission a project from you?
My husband has started a web site for me so people to look at photos of all of my carvings and contact us. The website is www.nicecarvings.com

Just so you know, Melissa will carve just about anything, so if you have a pinball machine you would love to immortalize or a jukebox or even if you're ready to have a custom sign for your game room, contact her for a quote.

I'd like to say thank you to Melissa and her husband Jason for making these unique and beautiful creations for me to proudly display in my game room for many, many years to come. GR


Painting the carvings requires careful supervision

Melissa Jones and a few of her creations

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Friends, Fun, and Games

Organizing a Game Room Tournament

by James Hills

Golden Tee is a popular tournament game

Do you have a great game room with tons of classic and modern arcade games, maybe a pool table and a dart board too? Imagine how much more fun it would be with a dozen of your closest friends fighting it out for the title of Game Room King!

After all, what's the point of building an awesome game room if you are the only one there on a cold Saturday night?

Holding a tournament may seem like a daunting task, but it really doesn't need to be.

Step 1: Select the Games

For most of us, unfortunately this will be the easiest choice since we probably don't have a full arcade or pool hall at our disposal.

My game room has a Golden Tee Complete, a Pool Table, Dart Board and a Ms. Pac Man, so let's start with that. You can use other games as well, or focus on just a single game if you prefer. The nice thing about games is that pretty much anything from Candyland to Defender can be used in a tournament.

Step 2: Decide How to Rank the Players

There are two principle ways to rank the players in a tournament. The first is to use a system of brackets and the second is to rank players based on high score.

Pool is probably the most common game room game as even those of us without a specific "game room" may have a pool table in the garage, basement or living room.

Brackets are ideal for games like pool (8-ball and 9-ball) where there isn't really a specific scoring system. Additionally, brackets are very useful for darts where you are really competing against another player, not the entire field.

The basic principle in a bracket-based tournament is that players face off against one another, with the loser moving to the loser's bracket (for double elimination) and the winners advancing to the next round. (see illustration)

You can draw your own brackets using a pen and paper or chalk and chalkboard, or you can print the one available at CoinOp Sports: http://www.coinopsports.com

Brackets are also useful for driving and fighting arcade games, so you can get as creative as you want with your game room tournament.

An easy way to assign bracket spots is to write numbers from 1 through 20 (or however many players you have) on a set of poker chips. Place the chips in a bucket and have each person draw. For teams, take half the number and double up. Then once everyone has drawn, pair people based on the numbers drawn with 1 playing 2, 3 playing 4 etc. to start.

For Ms. Pac-Man or any other score-based game such as Defender or most pinball games, a high-score ranking is probably the easiest method to keep track of the top players. This is pretty straight forward as you simply rank each player based on the cumulative number of points scored during a set number of rounds.

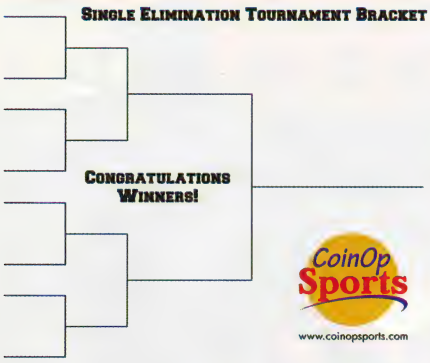
Golden Tee offers a host of different competitive methods including Closest to the Pin, Longest Drive and of course the classic Par ranking that can be used.

To select the over-all tournament winner, simply assign points to the top ranked finishers of each game. For instance, the top finisher would get 5 points, second 4, third 3, and so on. This way someone who is great in Ms. Pac-Man but dreadful in Darts can still have a chance to win.

While organizing a tournament for tournament's sake is going to be a great way to spend an afternoon, wouldn't it be great to help your community? This is your chance to put the "fun" back in fund raiser by using your game room equipment as the source of entertainment; and here's how:

- Choose your charity or local community organization to benefit (PTA, Scouts, Little League, Knights of Columbus etc.)
- Create your budget, including entry fees, costs (food, beverages, and prizes) then the remainder of the proceeds would be donated.
- Select which game room pieces you'll hold tournaments on.
- Invite your friends, neighbors and family over.

Jim Johnson's pinball scoreboard Lets everyone in the family compete



Above: A sample tournament bracket

- Be sure to have a representative of your chosen charity on hand in case your guests would like more information about the benefit, such as how the proceeds are put to use, etc.

Home game room fundraisers are a uniquely social way to show support while getting the maximum enjoyment out of your games.

In addition to holding benefit tournaments in your home game room, you might want to consider holding a larger tournament in a community center, church hall or other public location. Even some bars, restaurants, and arcades will assist you in organizing a tournament event. Also, many coin-op amusement operators and even some manufacturers will help you out by supplying games and even prizes for larger tournaments – though this is usually limited to events in their back yards.

If you are looking to organize a larger tournament, CoinOp Sports is also available to help you in all facets of your fundraising endeavors. From concept to execution, the company can help your organization maximize their benefit from tournament play.

Companies to Contact for Support

Locate your local operators on the AMOA's website: www.amoa.com

Arcade-In-A-Box (Tucson): Rents Arcade-In-A-Box and Jamma-In-A-Box units for home tournaments and can arrange for loans for charity events. www.arcadeinabox.com or store@arcadeinabox.com or 877-679-0100

Dream Arcades (Sacramento) and Dream Authentics (Indianapolis) also are willing to loan or rent units for charity / community fundraising events.

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5 Ways to Compete At Golden Tee's "Closest to the Pin"

"Head-to-Head"

This is the most popular format of CTP. A traditional head-to-head single or double elimination bracket is setup for all contestants. Each contestant gets up to 3 shots in each match. A coin toss is used to determine which player tees-off first. Player 1 shoots until a mark (ball on green) is set. Player 2 then tries to beat the mark set by player 1 by getting closer to the pin. Once player 2 succeeds, player 1 shoots again until he/she can reclaim the closest mark. Winner moves on in the bracket. A new hole is selected each round. In the event that a hole-in-one is made by a player, the opponent must match the HIO in order to initiate a rematch.

"One and Done"

The contestants get one chance at a hole-in-one each round. This format works well if you have new contestants arriving during the competition, since they can enter any of the remaining rounds. Each round has a predetermined time period. For instance, 10 minutes. During the 10-minute round all the participating contestants get one chance at a hole-in-one. Change hole each round. The closest shooter goes on to the finals. In one hour you have 5 10-minute rounds and a 10-minute finals consisting of the 5 finalists. Finals are run the same way with all players getting one shot. Ties are decided with a one-shot playoff.

This format can handle a very large crowd of 35+ with no problems. For mega-crowds 50 +, increase the length of the round to 15 minutes and qualify the 2 closest shooters each round.

"Round Robin"

This format is perfect for small groups of less than 12 players. Each contestant takes one shot, and the first to get a hole-in-one is the winner. The players continue to shoot in order until an ace is made. If no one gets a hole-in-one by the end of the time limit, the player closest-to-the pin is the winner. If time permits, the winners can have a finals round using the same format.

"Rotation"

All the contestants get 3 shots each round. They take these shots in rotation, one player after the other. After each player has taken 3 shots, the player closest to the pin is the winner. Each round qualifies one shooter. Change hole each round. An ace immediately qualifies the shooter for the finals. In one hour you can have 5 10-minute rounds and a 10-minute finals consisting of the 5 finalists. Finals are conducted in the same format with the winner being the player who is ultimately closest to the pin.

"Zero In"

Similar to "Rotation" but different in that the players' 3 chances to get a hole-in-one during each round are taken consecutively one after the other. In essence they can "zero in" on the conditions and learn from their previous shot. If they come up short on their first attempt, they instinctively know they must hit it harder to get closer on their next try.

Each round qualifies one shooter. Change hole each round. An ace immediately qualifies the shooter for the finals. In one hour you can have 5 10-minute rounds and a finals consisting of the 5 finalists. Finals are conducted in the same format with the winner being the player who is ultimately closest to the pin.

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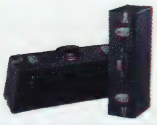

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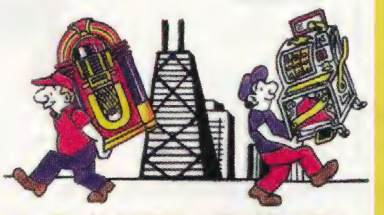

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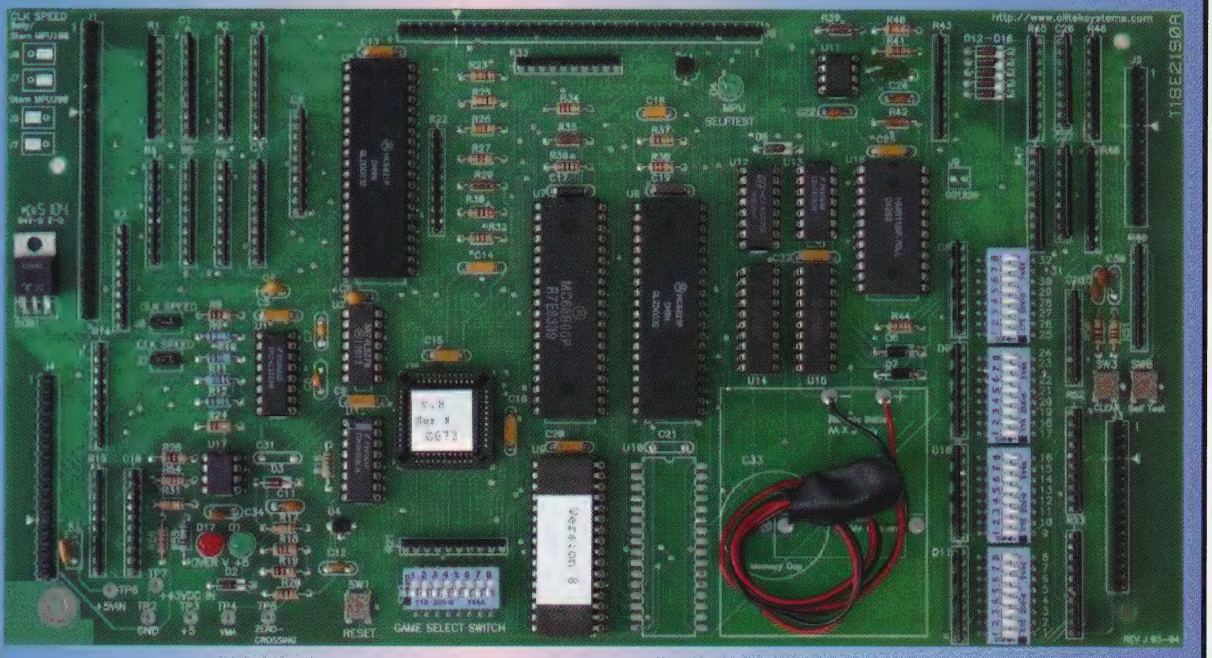

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Pooyan by Stern (1982)

by Kyle Snyder

Animals provided the inspiration for many classic arcade video games during the "golden years". You had frogs in Sega/Gremlin's *Frogger*, apes in Nintendo's *Donkey Kong* series, and Atari chose two radically different species, Kangaroos and Centipedes, to star in two of their hit titles. Stern had players saving baby Turtles, Universal asked gamers to keep their Ladybug out of harms way, and arcade goers navigated rodents away from the cats and hawks in Exidy's *Mouse-trap*...

However, one animal that went under-utilized in arcades of yore was the pig. Stern Electronics attempted to remedy this in late 1982 with a title they licensed from Konami Industries of Japan, entitled *Pooyan*.

Pooyan is truly a wacky game with a bizarre concept. Players step into the shoes (or would that be "hamhocks"?) of "Mama Pig", as she fends off hungry wolves intent on stealing away her adorable little defenseless piglets.

Now here's where the "weirdness" starts to kick in (Stop me if you lose track):

The left hand side of the screen shows a tree. Wolves appear at the top of this tree and use balloons to slowly descend to the ground below. Once a wolf reaches the ground, he runs to the right, in his attempt to attack the Pig family.

Now, the pigs themselves are quite ingenious, as they have constructed an overly elaborate defense mechanism that looks like they put it together after watching a marathon of "*Mythbusters*" television episodes.

Mama Pig sits in a homemade elevator located on the right hand side of the screen. Two of her piglets operate a wench system that raises and lowers Mama Pig's basket. As Mama moves up and down, she uses a bow and arrow to fire at the balloons the wolves are using to get closer to her piglets. The arrows shoot straight across the screen from right to left. She can only shoot at the balloons, not the wolves themselves, as the canines block all body shots.

If a balloon is hit, it bursts, causing the wolf to fall painfully to the ground. This eliminates the wolf from that level (in other words, "kills" him), and awards points to Mama pig (and the player).

The wolves fight back by throwing rocks at Mama, but she can shoot those down with her arrows as well (Nice shot!), or the player can maneuver the joystick so that the rocks harmlessly bounce off of the bottom, or the roof of the elevator car. However, if a rock strikes Mama in the face, the player loses a turn.

Any wolves that reach the ground can climb a ladder behind Mama's elevator, from which they can attempt to bite Mama as she passes, causing another lost life for the player. Mama has no defense against these "back biting" wolves. However, the wolves "announce" their chomping intent by howling, so listening for these audio clues will enable Mama to stay safe and alert.

Mama has a second defense also... and it's particularly disturbing. This second weapon is meat. Yes, meat.

At various times during each level, a piece of meat will appear at the top-most level that Mama's elevator can reach. If you move

straight up, Mama "picks up" the meat, and will lob it at the wolves with the next press of the fire button. The meat falls in an arc, so it's useful for nailing wolves (or their balloons, rather) right before they reach the ground. Points for smacking wolves with meat, consecutively double from 200, to 400, to 800, to 1600 points (the maximum) per piece of meat thrown.

The fact that Mama Pig uses meat as a weapon reminds me of those cute cartoon pigs with chefs hats that almost always adorn signage for roadside barbecue shacks in small towns—adorable, but very unsettling at the same time. Sure, we don't know if the meat Mama throws at the wolves is pork, but then again, we don't know that it isn't either!

After defeating all the wolves on the first screen, Mama chases the canines to the "wolves' lair". A cliff stands in place of the tree from the first level, and several piglets are imprisoned in a cage in the lower left. The wolves in this screen begin on the ground, and use the balloons to ascend to the top of the cliff. If enough wolves reach the cliff, they push a boulder onto Mama's elevator contraption, losing another life for the player.

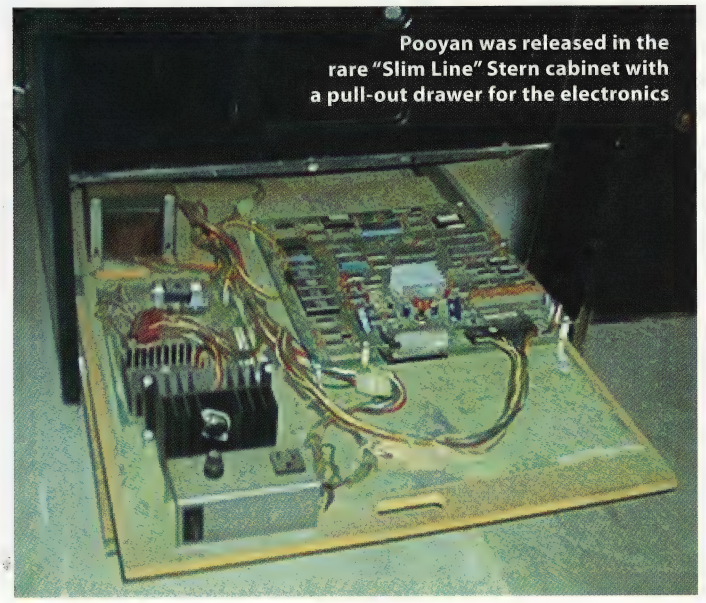
The balloons the wolves use in this level are of a stronger material, as they can take two, or even three, direct shots from an arrow before completely bursting. Each shot significantly slows the speed of the ascending wolf, buying Mama more time with which to defend herself.

As the end of this second level draws near, a "boss" wolf appears, colored pink (!) and rising on a magic flashing balloon (!!). Hit him five times with arrows or meat to defeat him and complete the level. After defeating the pink boss wolf, a little intermission plays, showing Mama releasing the piglets from the wolves' cage, and leading her young ones back home.

Players are then treated to a bonus stage. This screen plays almost the same as the "wolves' lair", except Mama has put away her archery equipment, and can only use the meat to burst the wolves' balloons. There is no danger or penalty if wolves reach the top of the cliff in this level.

After the bonus stage, the three levels repeat with increased speed. Sometimes, the pink boss wolf will appear at the top of the tree, throwing strawberries, which can be shot with arrows for extra points.

The graphics are cartoony and colorful, reminding me of a pre-school style color scheme. Certain visual effects are amusing (unintentionally perhaps?), as it appears that the wolves inflate the balloons through their noses (ewww), and they also "freak out" complete with spazzing eyes when their balloon pops and they fall to the ground. The animation of Mama pigs and her piglets gets the job done, but they aren't given as much personality as the villianous wolves.



Pooyan was released in the rare "Slim Line" Stern cabinet with a pull-out drawer for the electronics

Speaking of graphics, it's worth pointing out that the "tree" in the first screen, and the "cliff" in the second, are both shaped nearly identically to each other. They're simply colored differently to give the appearance of rocks or leaves. It's a clever trick, which most people will not notice unless they are actively looking for the effect.

A happy little jingle plays as background music for all the levels, in addition to an introductory tune played at the beginning of the game. Sound effects are pretty standard, although there is a very satisfying "pop" sound when bursting a balloon. It's probably the closest to the "popping your cheek" sound that a video game will ever get.

Various websites have made the claim that Pooyan is based on the "Three Little Pigs" fairy tale, but aside from the basic conflict of the pigs versus the wolves, I see no similarity. The fairy tale has one lone wolf against three pigs, not an army of wolves against one Mama pig using arrows, meat, and an elevator car in her defense. The wolves aren't blowing down anybody's houses, whether they are made of straw, stick or brick, and there's certainly no hair on anybody's chinny chin chin.

Based on a friend's suggestion, I researched if there is a Japanese variant of the nursery rhyme that involves balloons and elevator cages, but my research turned up nothing. This appears to be no more based directly on the traditional "Three Little Pigs" nursery rhyme than the "Flintstones" is based on real prehistoric cave paintings.

Now, as for that wacky name... although Pooyan sounds similar to a certain crude euphemism... it actually translates to "Little Pigs" in Japanese. Given that the phrase "Little Pigs" is rather unremarkable, its probably a good idea that Stern decided to keep the name un-translated to English when licensing it from Konami.

Pooyan was released in the rare Stern "slim-line" cabinet, which features a front access drawer containing the PCB, power supply, and fuses for convenient maintenance. With the exception of Stern's 1982 hit *Tutankham*, the remaining slim-line cabinet titles (*Minefield, Tazzmania, Star Jacker, Bagman, Super Bagman*, and *Rescue*) read like a who's who of possible upcoming Lost Arcade Classic subjects.

Despite it's scarcity in arcades, Pooyan was actually adapted to various home consoles of the era, including the Atari 2600, the Atari 8-bit series of computers, the Commodore 64, and the Tomy Tutor, a very obscure "beginners" home computer.

Even though Mama Pig and her family didn't become the huge phenomenon Stern and Konami had hoped for, their antics impressed at least one certain, young, impressionable video game player. So, it is with great respect and fondness that I can say that Pooyan has proudly earned its title, as a certified *Lost Arcade Classic*. GR

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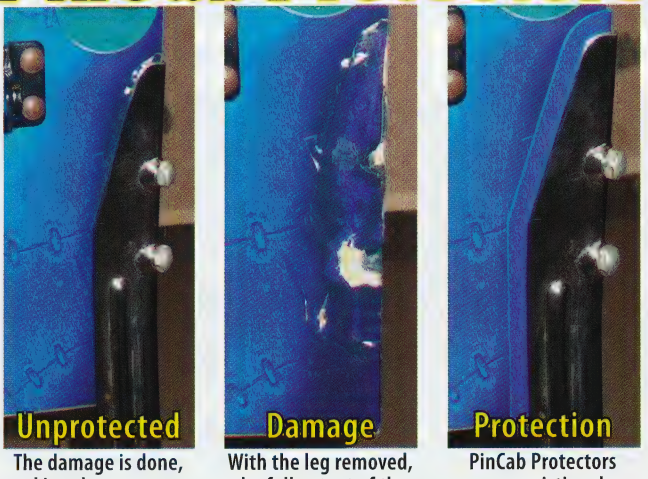

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Rob Craig's

Tales of the Silverball

Fault Analysis: The Art of Tracking Down Pinball Problems

Rob Craig, hard at work repairing a pinball board

Never before has there been so much advice on how to restore or maintain a pinball machine. But no matter how much advice a person gets, it doesn't always translate into productive work on the machine. With those who have never had a basic electronics course (whether classroom or study-at-home) or some months of practice, the intuition of knowing what is working and what isn't working rarely exists. I've always found that there is a point in everything where you lose motivation and become quite counterproductive. Not knowing some basic fundamentals really frustrates rookies in electronic repair. Unless your free time resembles that of a retiree, you probably find a point when you're ready to throw in the towel. Hopefully this short article will help.

I need to point out that this article is simply a brief overview into a much deeper study in fault analysis and electronics repair as it relates to electronic computer controlled pinball. It is impossible to do anything more within the confinement of a few pages. Still, I bet you'll find something here to hold onto when you start to troubleshoot your next pinball problem.

Without going into all the nuts and bolts of every pinball system, you can pretty much summarize all solid state pinball machines as a collection of boards that interface with the systems CPU board. Knowing intimately what job they do helps speed up the process of narrowing down the problem. Advice that directs you to a particular portion of the system is usually helpful no matter what level of understanding you have about electronics.

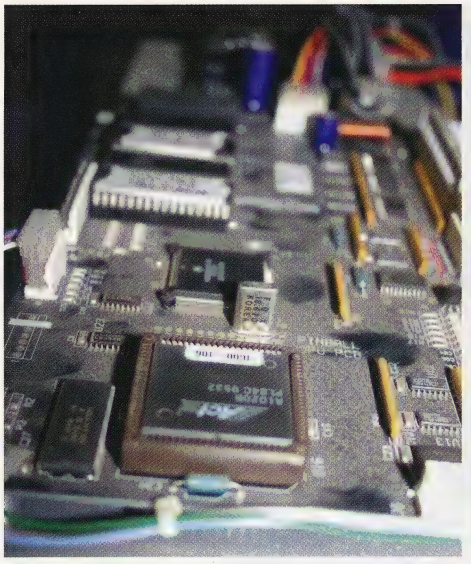
Breaking down the pinball machine

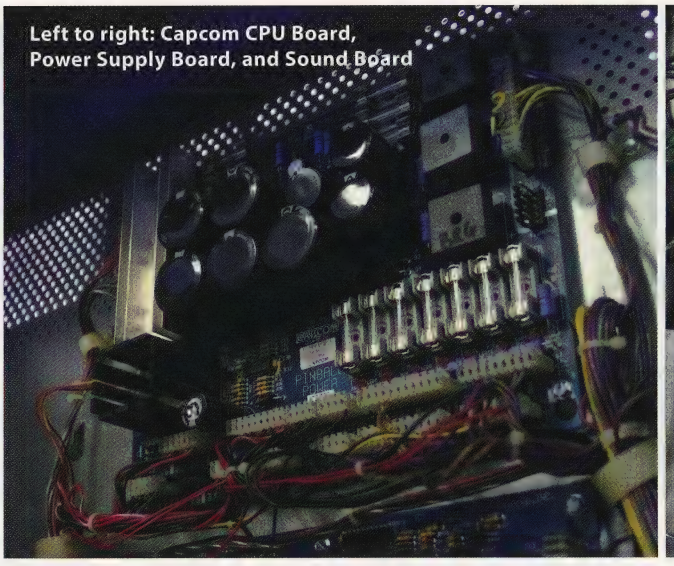
Zooming out a bit, let's start at the beginning with a look at the machine. What happens when you power on a typical solid state pinball machine? Power feeds through the line cord, into your switch and primary fuse, into a transformer which breaks down the voltage into usable levels (still alternating current). From there, most of it heads to a power supply where AC becomes DC, something that all integrated circuits (IC's) require. Supply voltages head to the 4 main systems in all pinball machines: the CPU board, the driver board, sound boards, & display drivers.

CPU boards (the brains of the system) have to kick everything off, right on time. A reset circuit starts the process of initializing individual sections within the CPU board. Usually game programs (stored in ROM chips) are checked, memory circuitry is tested (RAM chips), interfaces are reset and programmed (PIA's) for the switch matrix and lamp matrix, and finally the game specific program starts the attract mode.

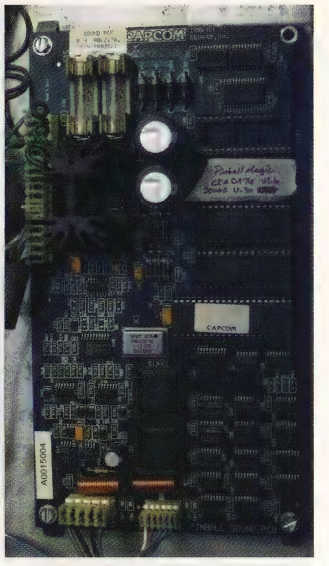
The driver board usually contains all the switching circuits needed to trigger coils on the game and switch computer controlled lamps on and off. While in attract mode, the lamp driver transistors are busy handling orders from the CPU to make interesting waves of blinking lamps across the playfield. Once a game is started, the lamp drivers are still taking orders from the CPU as to what lamps to turn on or off, and the coil driver transistors are responding to more CPU orders to do things like reset drop targers, kickout balls in saucers, kickout a ball into the shooter lane, and open (or close) a mobile gate. Not all coils are CPU controlled and knowing which ones aren't can save you a lot of time looking in the wrong place for answers.

Sound boards are almost like their own independent computer. While some were quite simple – only generating belches and blurps, later boards contain large amounts





Left to right: Capcom CPU Board, Power Supply Board, and Sound Board



of compressed sound data that's mixed with FM generated tones, creating a very nice collection of sound. The complexity of any particular sound board is directly related to how easy it is to fix. I've repaired some of the earliest solid state sound boards in 5 minutes with simple electrolytic capacitor swapping, yet ran into hours of troubleshooting complex Williams DCS sound boards of the 90's.

Display drivers are similar to sound boards in that they can vary greatly from generation to generation. What was integrated into the CPU boards with early Gottlieb and Bally systems were not with early Williams systems. Again with latter DMD boards, Williams handled logic translations from the CPU through their dot matrix driver boards, while Data East / Sega / Stern / Capcom chose to dedicate a complete CPU driven board with it's own game specific ROM to draw DMD eye candy.

Making Sense of It All

So how do you make troubleshooting and analyzing these various systems less complex? I've found that there is no complete substitution for real classroom electronics training and lab work. I seem to have gained a lot of permanent "memory burn in" on circuit analysis and simple component characteristics (resistors, capacitors, transistors, diodes, logic circuits, operational amplifiers, CPU characteristics) that would otherwise leave me only to the online manuals and advice of other pinball people.

Yet that advice and documentation is just the key to help anyone get up to speed and learn the ropes of pinball repair. Reading about other problems and their resolutions can keep you motivated even if plowing through schematic diagrams leaves you utterly disgusted.

Since this article can't ever be an exhaustive analysis on all things problematic in pinball, I'll hit general electronics fault analysis hard and hope that some of this will stick with you.

Making Big Problems Out of Little Ones

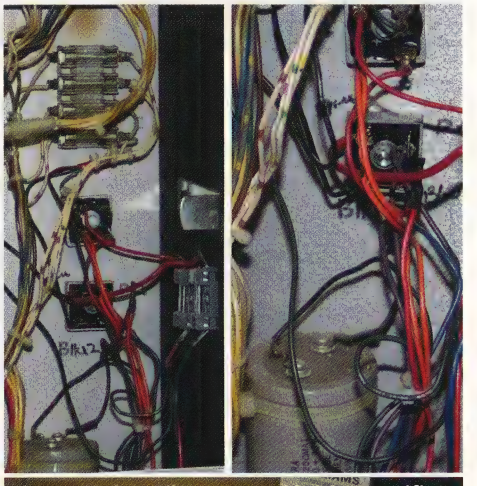
The way you analyze your pinball problems (and any electronic device) really should be a consistent, streamlined process. Think about what you already know about the system. While this will vary with everyone, it doesn't change the fact that most simple problems can quickly be inflated to monumental proportions in short time, simply by overlooking the obvious.

For example, I spent hours analyzing a Capcom CPU board, convinced that I had something that was locking up the program before it was totally up and running. I focused on that CPU board for days, learning all the quirky things that Capcom did differently than any other manufacturer. I then worked over the unique switch board, even replacing it with a NOS board only to find no solution.

After total frustration, I decided to recheck all of my power supply voltages. It turned out that the 12V opto supply was running about 3 volts low. Replacing capacitors in this area of the board fixed the voltage problem. Upon power-up, the machine completed its boot up sequence and was finally in attract mode. As tempting as it may be to blame Capcom for not allowing my game to at least report the lack of opto voltage as the problem, it was my own fault for not starting at the beginning with the fault analysis — I didn't analyze the entire system from the ground up.

Simple Visual Inspection

Perhaps the hardest problem to locate is the easy fix that was overlooked. I have bought a lot of "left for dead" operator machines that I can't power up and test when I have to make the deal. When I get them into the shop, the first thing I do is spend a lot of time looking around inside. With visual inspection alone you can find all types of issues. Disconnected cables, missing PCB mount screws, bad repair work (note these as potential problems areas), wrong boards installed, missing boards, missing fuses, cut wires, shorted diodes on switches, stuck tilts, disconnected ground straps, missing coils, battery acid damage... the list goes on and on. Whether it's a dead machine that you bought cheap or a nice one that just quit working, you really



Above: Pinbot Filter cap and bridge rectifiers
Below: ST:TNG transformer and service outlet

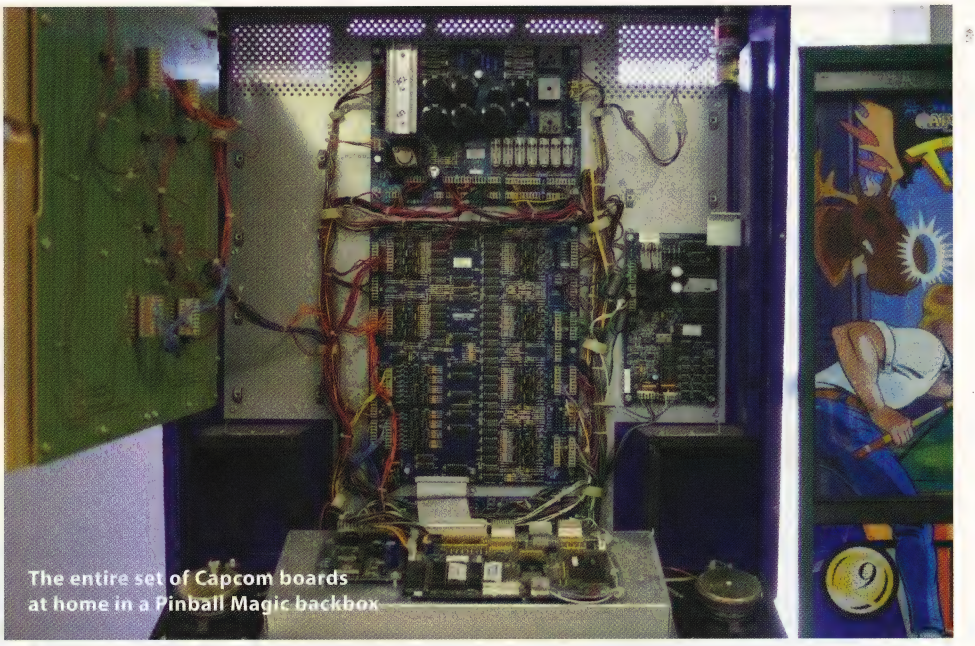
should do a visual first. Take your time and note anything that doesn't seem right. As your knowledge of the machine grows, your ability to quickly distinguish the obvious will get better and better.

Starting from the Ground Up

Ground up analysis is very important. It's like an upside-down pyramid of sorts. In order to get the final result, all of the supporting systems must be functional. If any one system shows fault, the systems before it need to be analyzed. Translated into pintech, if your game is dead, start at the line cord and work your way up to the boards in the head. I would hate to hear about someone sending boards off for repair when their problem was a broken wire from their line cord or a blown line fuse. Yet I've assisted a few that have had this exact issue and had somehow turned the problem into a complete mess. From AC to transformer to power supply to system (CPU, driver, DMD, sound), keep focused on isolating the particular system that's at fault. When you have that handled, zoom in further into the specific area of that system that's failing. At minimum, you'll have expanded your own mental database of pinball electronics technology, and perhaps you'll reward yourself with the correct diagnosis and repair.

Component Reliability

Electronic components have their own history when it comes to reliability. Silicon based components should be considered active devices. They include diodes, bridge rectifiers, transistors, and all IC's. With things switching on and off inside of these components, the opportunity for breakdown is high. The odds increase when you add higher voltages and currents. That's why you see coil driver transistors and bridge rectifiers dying earlier than almost all other silicon based components. Capacitors follow this same model. Although they don't contain a switching silicon element, capacitors are very busy charging and discharging. As a rule, the larger they are, the quicker the internal die-electrics breakdown. While small ceramic caps seem to last forever, larger electrolytic caps need to be checked for increasing ripple voltages. For CPU board voltages, dying capacitors are the leading cause of supply voltage drop. Resistors on the other hand rarely die on their own, being the least active of the bunch. Essentially converting electricity to heat, a resistor only seems to suffer from... (you guessed it) too much heat. You can see this in early Williams driver boards and Bally



The entire set of Capcom boards at home in a Pinball Magic backbox

power supplies where the heat has either burnt off the component casing, or perhaps de-soldered itself from the board. While this is such a general overview, I admit that I've kept this component information tucked away since my school days. In the shop, it helps me make think a bit clearer about which component could be problematic.

Wrapping It Up

While I'm tempted to drop another 10 pages into this topic, I realize that I need to wrap this up. So I'll end with perhaps the most important item. There is no greater tool in my shop than the Digital Multimeter (DMM). With this alone, you can check every fuse, transistor, diode, switch, and wire (to name the most common). Voltage inputs and outputs of power supplies can be checked against manuals or other documentation online. I've been through at least a dozen meters over the years, and I think every one of them came with a short manual on how to properly measure voltage, current, and resistance and how to test diodes and wiring and/or traces for continuity. That manual alone could be one of the most important first-steps for anyone wanting to learn more about pinball electronics.

Lastly, online documentation is better now than it's ever been. And there is no better site for exhaustive pintech education than Clay Harrell's Coin-Op Game Repair Guides site (www.marvin3m.com/fix.htm). Not only does Clay discuss problems and solutions, but there is an education inside that will help you learn how things work and why they fail. You should print out the guide that applies to your type of game, and write down plenty of notes as you work. GR

Rob always keeps a sharp eye out for pinball problems

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The WAYBACK Machine

by David Ellis

A Return to Classic Game Design

Back in the day, when I stepped up to a coin-op game, I never really thought much about what went into designing it. This is definitely true when it comes to pinball machines. It wasn't until around 1985 that I realized that there was more to pinball than just slapping at the flippers to keep the ball in play as long as possible. I clearly remember the moment of that realization. I was playing *Centaur II* at an arcade that I visited just about every weekend after work. The ball rolled over one of the switches at the top, and the voice boomed, "Two X completed." It was then that it dawned on me that there were goals to complete. Hitting the targets added to my score...but hitting the targets *in the right order* multiplied my bonus, or triggered multiball mode.

There was never such a moment of clarity for me as far as video games were concerned. In most video games, the goals are fairly obvious. They're even spelled out on the screen for you in most games if you stand around and watch the attract mode. But even so, knowing what to do in a game and appreciating—or even considering—what went into the design of the game was, and is, far from the average player's mind.

Unlike most video game aficionados, I actually got to live the dream. Almost by accident, I landed a job in the video game industry and now, fourteen years later, I design video games for a living. These days, obviously, I *do* spend a lot of time thinking about video game design. And as a classic game collector, I can't help but compare modern video game design to the design of the games I played in the arcades as a teenager.

There's no question that video games have come a long way from a technology standpoint. The very first video game I ever played was *Breakout*. A square ball, a paddle, and some pixilated bricks. That's it. They even had to use a plastic overlay for color because all video games at that time were only black and white.

I was mesmerized with *Breakout*, as I was with *Pong*, *Gunfight*, *Sea Wolf*, *Space Wars*, *Lunar Lander*, *Space Invaders*, and pretty much every new game that came along in that era. Every new game seemed more fun than the previous one. The advances in technology—vector monitors, color monitors, more processing power—all led to better game play. Designers of the time rose to the challenge of using new technology to advance not only the visual appeal of their games but the playability as well.

Every major video game genre we see today was invented by designers in the classic era—or, in some cases, adapted from earlier electromechanical games. Sports games (*Pong*, *Track & Field*), fighting games (*Warrior*, *Karate Champ*), driving games (*Night Driver*, *Pole Position*), platform games (*Donkey Kong*, *Rolling Thunder*), and even first-person shooters (*Crossbow*, *Cheyenne*) all owe their existence to innovative video game designers who came up with the ideas over twenty years ago.

Now, jump forward to today. The processing power of today's home video game consoles exceeds the wildest dreams of the 70s and 80s. Nothing in the arcades then—or even now—could come close to the graphics capabilities of systems like the PlayStation 3 or the Xbox 360. The arcades today are a mere shadow of what they were in the 80s, but the video game industry is stronger than ever. Literally thousands of games are on the shelves of every game store, Best Buy and Wal-Mart. Modern video gamers have a mind-boggling selection of games to choose from. Maybe too many.

The question is, are the games actually any better than their arcade predecessors?

There is no doubt that the games *look* better. Who is going to argue that the graphics in *Crossbow* were more realistic and immersive than those in *HalfLife 2* or *Gears of War*? But are video games today more fun than they were twenty or thirty years ago?

This is a question I ponder a lot, and often the answer is not only are the games not more fun than the arcade classics sitting in my garage, they are in many cases *less* fun.

Take *Spy Hunter* for example.

Spy Hunter is one of my favorite classic video games. It was one of the first three I bought for my home arcade. I can literally play *Spy Hunter* for hours without getting tired of it. From a technological standpoint, the game is obviously very simple: a top-down, 2D driving game with a scrolling background. Not even really pushing the limits of technology for 1983.

At a glance, the game design is also fairly simple. There are only six enemy types (counting the two boats), and the player's goal is simply to keep going and kill or avoid every enemy he encounters. From a control standpoint, though, the game is actually quite complex for an 80s game. Not only does it have a steering wheel, a gearshift, and a gas pedal, it also has five buttons (two triggers, two thumb buttons, and the Weapons Van button). This could tend to make the game a little intimidating at first...but here's where the beauty of the game design starts to kick in.

In *Spy Hunter*, the first portion of the game is timed. While the timer is counting down, the player can die as many times as he wants. This gives the player time to get accustomed to the controls and to get a feel for how the game plays. By the time the player starts losing lives for his mistakes, he's got a pretty good idea what's going on. This is really an essential part of coin-op game design.

The player has to enjoy the game experience right from the start. He has to get his quarter's worth early on, or he's going to feel ripped off and not put another quarter in the game. That's a sure way for a coin-op game to fail miserably. There were exceptions to this rule, of course. *Defender*, which remains one of the most infuriatingly frustrating games every created to me more than 20 years since it grabbed my first quarter, was very successful even though most players only got about 45 seconds worth of game play on their first few quarters. But I digress.

The great thing about *Spy Hunter*—and many other classic arcade games—is that there is no ending. You can keep playing as long as you have lives remaining. There are also no levels per-se. The scenery changes (slightly) and you have the occasional opportunity to trade in your souped-up car for a souped-up boat, but for the most part you just keep going. The enemies get progressively more difficult to deal with as you go, increasing the challenge, but there is a familiar pattern to the game. In *Spy Hunter*, it's not a pattern that you can follow every time and be assured of victory, but a simple pattern for Weapons Van placement. After you've played the game for a while, you know exactly which special weapon—oil slick, smoke screen, or missiles—is waiting for you down every fork in the road. A savvy player who learns and keeps track of this pattern can really excel.

Spy Hunter is usually a quick game experience. Most of my games last less than ten minutes. You play the game for score, each time trying to beat your own personal best—or that of the pesky party guest who put a new high score on the board over the weekend. But whether you beat your all time high or not, you can walk away satisfied after a game or two and still have most of your afternoon free for other pursuits.

Compare the classic *Spy Hunter* experience to the modern *Spy Hunter* experience. A few years back, Midway released an updated console version of the game. Since it was one of my favorites, I naturally picked it up for the Xbox. I was anxious to see what could be done to improve the *Spy Hunter* experience.

The answer, unfortunately, was "not much."

Oh, the new and "improved" *Spy Hunter* is pretty. The graphics are a quantum leap ahead of anything an 80s arcade game could display. But the impact of that beauty was lost fairly quickly.

The new *Spy Hunter* is a third person, 3D game—your point of view is from behind and slightly above the car. Although quite typical in modern driving games, this point of view has huge disadvantages over the old 2D view. In the arcade game, you can see enemies ahead of you and behind you at all times. In the console version, this isn't nearly as easy. Then there's the heads-up display, which shows speed, mission time, weapon rounds remaining, a damage meter, and your turbo boost status. That's a lot more information to process than the timer, score, and lives remaining on the classic version!

Then, there are the controls—in addition to steering, you've got eight buttons to deal with. Again, a lot to wrap your head around.

But games do get more complex over time. Controls can be learned over time, and there *is* a tutorial mission in the game to teach you what you need to know. The real problem with the design—at least as far as I'm concerned—is the level-based game play.

Almost every modern console game is set up in a series of levels, and the new *Spy Hunter* follows this design pattern. Each level takes about 10-20 minutes to complete, and you have to complete the current level in order to advance to the next. Gone is the experience of the five-minute game fix. Playing a game now involves a real time investment. If you don't screw up, you might get through a level fairly quickly. But, if you *do* fail, you have to start back at the beginning of the level. And, if you quit the game, you're *still* at the beginning of that level the next time you boot up the game.

For me, this is not nearly the satisfying gaming experience I get when I fire up my *Spy Hunter* machine and take off down the road in pursuit of my next high score. I'll probably never finish *Spy Hunter* on the Xbox. Heck, it will probably just gather dust on my shelf until I trade it in. But just writing this column has me hankering to go

out to the garage and play a few games of the coin-op version.

I'll admit I'm hopelessly mired in the games of the past. As a modern game designer in a competitive industry, I have no choice but to follow *some* of the conventions of modern design in the games I work on. But I try to bring as much of the "old school" design as I can into the games I work on. Sadly, today's publishers are primarily driven by technology and glitz. If the game doesn't have graphics that push a console's technological limits, the publishers aren't interested. Sony won't even consider a game submission for the PlayStation 3 unless you explain to them in writing how your title will take advantage of their high-tech hardware and (visually) show off their console to the greatest possible advantage. Game play is almost always secondary. It's impossible to say how many great game designs never see the light of day because graphics always trump game play in today's marketplace.

Luckily, there seems to be some hope in the current crop of consoles. While Microsoft and Sony battle it out to see who can push the most polygons, Nintendo—once the top dog in game consoles—has decided to follow a different path. The Nintendo Wii is not much more powerful graphics-wise than Nintendo's previous console, the GameCube. The Wii's innovation is in the way the player interacts with the console. The Wii remote control has both a pointer and a motion sensor, which allow the player to point and click as he would with a mouse and to control movement by simply moving the controller. So, to swing a tennis racket, the player swings the remote, and to bowl the player performs a bowling motion.

This might seem like a fairly simple and straightforward innovation. And the lack of significant graphical improvement over the previous generation of consoles might sound like marketing suicide. But, I happen to think Nintendo is onto something. Because while Sony and Microsoft are essentially telling designers, "just keep doing what you're doing... just do it bigger," Nintendo is actually inviting video game designers to think in a whole new way. The horsepower just isn't there as far as bigger and better graphics. To make a game stand out, the designer must include new and innovative game play—largely centered on the new dimensions of interactivity made possible by the Wii's unique control system. And because that control system is so easily accessible, that means the games that are produced for the Wii will tend to be accessible in a way that the massively complex console games of the last few years have never been.

Don't believe me? I took my Wii to my parents' house over Thanksgiving and let them try their hand at bowling and golf. Now, my 74-year-old parents, who haven't touched a video game since *Pac-Man* and the Atari 2600 were state-of-the art, are planning on picking up a Wii of their own so they can play it with their friends.

I'm thrilled to be the designer on our company's first Wii game. This is the first time that my classic game habit will mesh perfectly with the game I am designing. This is my chance to inject some of that old "step right up and start playing" mentality that was so prevalent in the arcades we all grew up in.

There will always be a market for complex games. The hardcore market demands it. But for those of us who long for a simpler time, when game play innovation was what drew us to video games, I think our time is coming again.

Keep your eye on the Wii. In another twenty years, I think Nintendo's innovative new console is what people will be referring to as a "classic video game." GR

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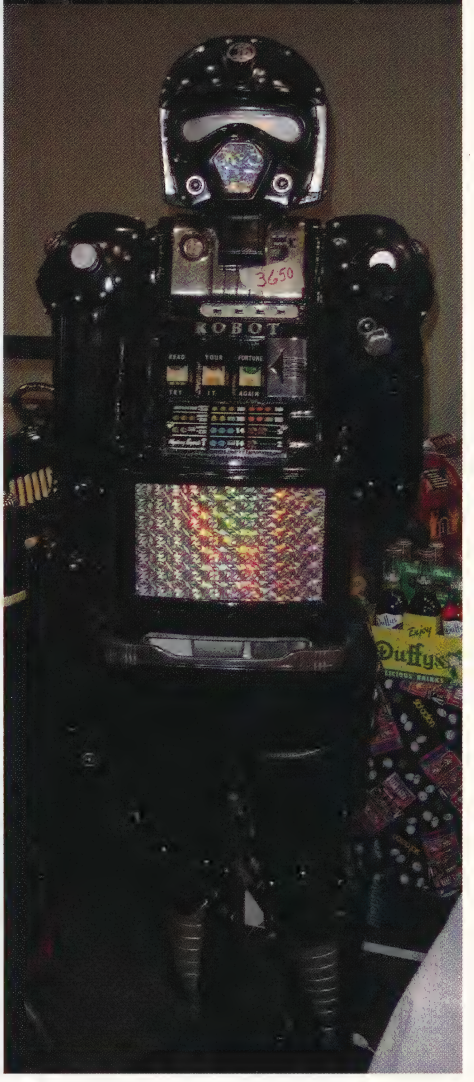
The Chicagoland

Like many similar shows, the Chicagoland Show, now it its 27th year (www.chicagolandshow.com) was chock full of interesting and unusual game room items. Filling up two halls at the Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles, IL, this show can be likened to a cross between a swap meet and a giant home recreation showroom. Items ranged from pieces of junk that barely sparked my interest to amazing classic jukes and even a company making new, retro-styled televisions.

Top Ten Things about Chicagoland:

1. Gumball Machine candies in bulk, but smaller packages than what might be purchased through a vending supply company for commercial accounts.
2. Jukeboxes Galore, from early 1940's models through late 1990's CD jukes. Two units specifically stood out, the first was a beautifully restored 1940's era Wurlitzer and even a classic Rock-ola "One More Time" unit that now sported an LCD monitor and PC to play digital music files at home.
3. More Beer Signs than I can name brands of beer!
4. Classic Vending Machines, including salted nuts, condoms and a wide variety of remade classic pop machines. There were also quite a few more modern units brought by operators hoping to clear their warehouse of junk.
5. Tons of Pinball Machines. While the Pinball Expo a week earlier featured many more rare units, this show featured many more popular units with mass consumer appeal such as Shaq Attack, and Lethal Weapon 3.
6. Richard Delong's hand-carved classic slot machine figures. This was my first time seeing it in person—Rich was featured in the October issue of GameRoom, and they were just as impressive as the article made them out to be.
7. A Working Pong. This would be a great addition to any video game collector!
8. The Great Variety in Prices. While most of the items here were appropriately priced for a consumer show held in a wealthy Chicago suburb, there were quite a few operators from out of town who simply wanted to dump their dead wood and priced their wares to sell quickly. While walking down one isle during the dealer preview night, I saw a Golden Tee for $900 from one operator and another for $2,800 only a few booths down! The only difference



Show: Fall 2006

by James Hills

between the two was that the more expensive one featured Golden Tee Complete – a software upgrade that only costs a few hundred dollars for any Golden Tee Fore game.

9. Classic Video Arcade Games. If you are looking to add a classic video game to your game room, there were plenty of people here to help you make a decision. Vendors ranged from MAME cabinet companies advertising "thousands of games" to gorgeously restored hits and of course dozens of games at a less than end-user state. One vendor even advertised that he had "40 other games that do not work."
10. If you think you have everything, *you don't*! For me personally, the highlight of the show was a small company called Predicta who make a line of retro 1950's style television sets. These sets aren't just reconditioned units from yester-year, they are actually brand new sets with all the modern features one would expect, including a wireless remote and the ability to connect it to VCRs, DVD players and cable boxes — though each unit also features a standard antenna port for those wishing to continue to live in a pre-cable world.

For those who missed the fall show, the Chicagoland Show will be returning March 30-April 1, 2007. For more information, please visit: www.chicagolandshow.com

GameRoom Magazine's

GameRoom of the Month

by Scott Elzey

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Before...

Now this is my kind of barn! It's both functional and fun, and as cosy a gaming retreat as I can imagine. I've got to give Scott some extra props for picking a theme and sticking with it throughout the entire game room, right down to the choice of racing-themed pinball machines — Kevin

My wife, son and daughter purchased a farm in rural Wells County, Indiana in 1994. The barn was built circa 1885 and had serious structural issues. It also had tons of busted hay bales complete with all the raccoon, groundhog, and bird remnants you could imagine. Several builders told me it would be less expensive to burn the barn and build new. But, I couldn't see myself destroying a 100-year-old structure.

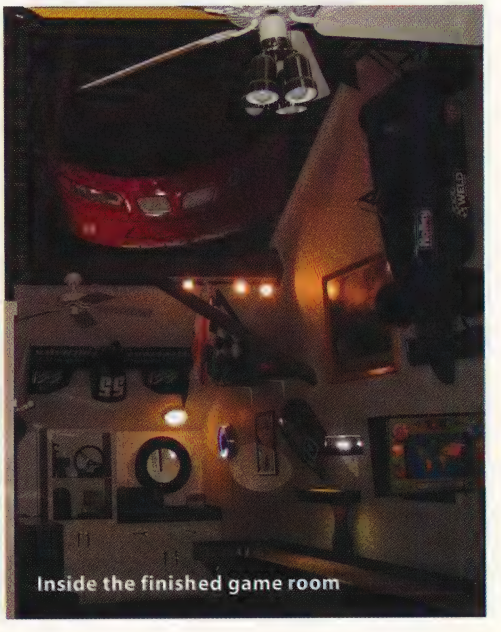
After a few years of hard work, the barn had a new floor, siding, and roof. I was standing inside the barn one day admiring all the open space above me. I was remembering back to my teen-age years and the fun I had when my friends would come over to my father's basement to play pinball, ping-pong and pool. The little light bulb above my head flickered 'on,' and a couple years later I had a climate controlled five-room 3000 square foot game room in the upper levels of the old barn.

Since open-wheel racing was part of my heritage, I decided to have a racing themed game room. I've decorated with several vintage race cars, boats, helmets, NASCAR sheet metal, trophies, and other vintage racing items.

The present gaming list includes a vintage 22' shuffleboard, MAME arcade box, two pinballs, some pachinko slots, a pusher, skee-ball, foos-ball, and a few old electro-mechanical arcade games. I didn't own a pinball until just a few months ago, and now I have two. My friends warned me about the pinball addiction and I'm now living proof.

The old barn has a kitchen and full bath. I have a few more cubic feet of air above my head in some areas of the barn and the next work will be two bedrooms, dining room, and office in another loft. I'm not sure what has cost me more money; the inability to look up inside a building and not enclose the space, or my gaming addiction. GR

...and After



Inside the finished game room

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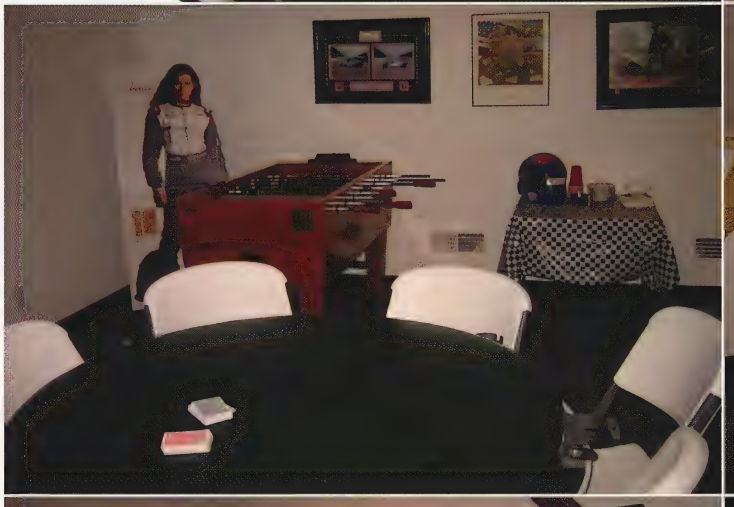

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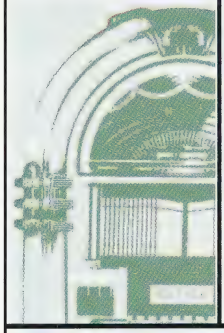

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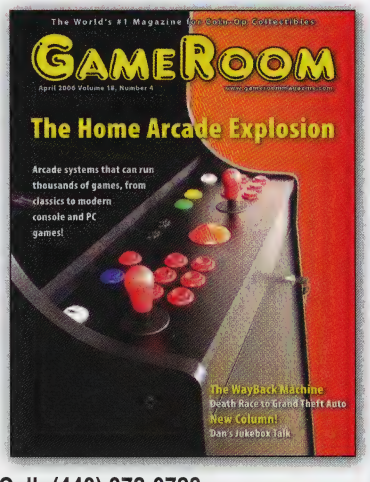

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Confessions of a Coin-Op Addict

Subject Name:
Scott Gerdeman

Occupation:
Telecommunications

1st Pinball Owned:
Williams Whirlwind

My first real coin-op memory came from trips to the laundromat while living in Lima Ohio. I was pretty little, about 3 or 4, and if I was really good, I could get a cold glass bottle of Big Red out of the pop machine. It was one of those models where each bottle is locked in its own hole and had a narrow door that you reached into. I'm still looking for one of those machines to put down in the basement; it would be a nice reminder of a time long gone.

Flash forward some years and a move to Grand Rapids Michigan. My Dad told me about this "video game" he had played while traveling on business. "Pac Mac" was in all of the airport arcades and he told me I had to try it. The local meat market had one, and Dad showed me what to do. From then on, if we were out to dinner, picking up a pizza, whatever, I was asking for a quarter from Mom or Dad. *Pac Man, Ms. Pac Man, Super Pac Man, Space Invaders, Gorf, Robotron*, on and on, if there was a machine, I was always asking for a quarter to try it out.

If one machine at the meat market or pizza shop was good, then a full arcade at Aladdin's Castle up at the mall was the greatest. They had a huge Hercules pinball there, and the video craze was cranking. I specifically remember playing the *Kiss* pinball they had at that arcade, and occasionally while playing, I'd get a nasty shock from it. It was just enough to scare you. Being 8 or 9 (and not really knowing anything about pinball), I thought it was a stupid gimmick. After all, the *Black Knight* had a "magna-save," I just assumed the "shock" on the Kiss machine was a feature. It seemed to fit with their evil, mischievous makeup. In my 8 year old macho bravado, I wasn't about to let any stupid pin keep me from playing it. The pin took all of the quarters I fed it and I finally had to walk away. Now that I'm an adult (and a pin owner) I know that the shock wasn't part of the game. The darn thing wasn't grounded!

The early eighties were really the highpoint of the arcades, and the place to be on a Saturday morning was *Putt Putt Golf and Games* near our house. For $5, you could play unlimited arcade games and unlimited golf all morning, from 8 until noon. Of course they called it "Super Saturday," and it sure was for us. We played *Galaga* and *Spy Hunter* until our eyes fell out. *Dragon's Lair, Punch Out*, and *720* sucked up tons of our time. *Gauntlet, Gridiron Fight*, 5 or 6 pins, tons of games, they had it all. Plus the $5 entrance fee also got you a hotdog, a bag of chips and a small pop. What a crazy deal for a kid. We used to talk about it all week at school and couldn't wait for Saturday. If we really timed it right, we could bust out of the arcade around noon and take in a movie across the street. Sadly, both the Putt Putt and the movie theater have long since been torn down, replaced by an IHOP and a Target. "Progress" moves on, I guess.

The time spent at Putt Putt planted the seed in my head that I could have my own gameroom someday. We played a ton of *Whirlwind* pinball during those Saturdays as a kid. That just seemed to be the game that held my interest the longest. I knew that Whirlwind would have to be my first coin op purchase. When I was finally able to have my own house (and a place to put a pin), I posted a want ad on Mr. Pinball (www.xmission.com/~daina/pinball.html), and I got a response from someone with one not too far from my home. In just a short time it was mine, and I soon learned the joys of shopping out my first pin.

When buying the Whirlwind, I was told that one would never be enough. They were right. In addition to the Whirlwind, we currently have a *Fathom* pinball. It is a perfect match to my other hobby, marine aquarium keeping. We also have an *English Mark* electronic dartboard and an air hockey table. Gone from the collection is a *Flash Gordon* pin, a *Trident* pin, a *Golden Tee 97* machine and a Capcom Bowling game. They were all parts of multi-machine deals that I was able to find. I'd work on them, clean them up and sell them off. The profits have gone into finishing my basement arcade.

I sold the Flash Gordon on Ebay, and I was shocked that the winner drove to Michigan all the way from Utah to pick it up! They really wanted it badly—like so much in the arcade hobby, that pin held significant sentimental value for them. The funny thing was that they were at my house for only 20 minutes, about enough time to play a ball or two, let me count the cash, and load it into their truck. Then they were back on the road to Utah. Some people in this hobby will go to great lengths to get a little bit of their childhood back.

I'm on the lookout for a *Star Trek The Next Generation* pin and a *Paragon* currently, but those may have to wait until I have the proper home to put them in. It is going to be hard enough finishing the basement around the games that we already have down there, but in the end it will surely be worth it. My wife Tracey thought a basement arcade would be a great idea and a fantastic place for my son Nick and his friends to hang out. Unfortunately the days of the local arcades are gone. I'm glad I'm getting a chance to still create that nostalgic piece of arcade history in my own home for my family. GR

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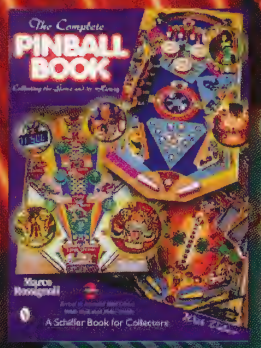

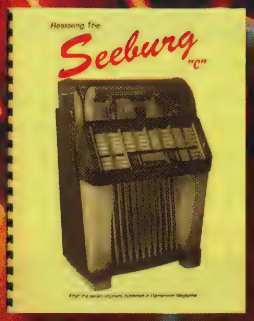

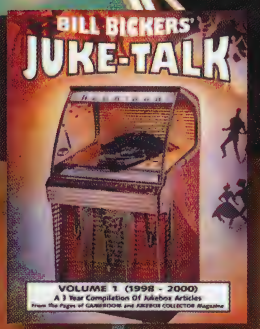

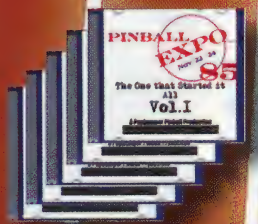

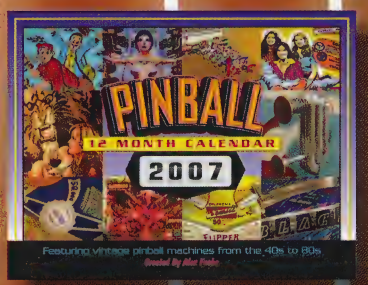

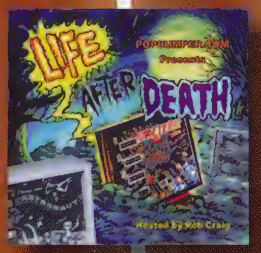

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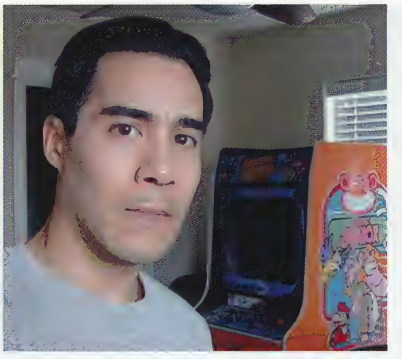
Classic Arcade Flyer

by Dan Hower



Harem Cat by Universal (1979)

According to the flyer record, the first video pinball game was *Super Flipper* by Chicago Coin. When it emerged on the market in 1975, there was a sudden fear and anxiety that the fledgling video game industry was going to assimiliate pinball machines.

This month's flyer is for a video pinball game called *Harem Cat* by Universal (1979), a unique take on "video pinball." Instead of a video simulation of pinball, Harem Cat uses a 9" black and white video monitor to display the score and provide simple animation.

While there is no evidence that a player had any direct interaction with this monitor, the concept of a video monitor enhancing the playability of pinball instead of completely replacing it was further defined in *Baby Pac-Man* by Bally/Midway (1983). Baby Pac-Man also uses a regular pinball playfield and playability switches from the playfield to the video monitor and back again. Baby Pac-Man it is one of the few video pinball games that was very popular upon its release and still continues to be very collectible today. Is it possible that Harem Cat paved the way for this type of playability?

All techincal achievements aside, Harem Cat is a beautiful looking machine. Universal was very consistent with the design of its cabinets and use of color, even when it crossed over from video to pinball. Just like *Mr. Do!*, *Lady Bug*, and *Cosmic Avenger*, Harem Cat sported a coat of white paint with red and orange pinstriping down the sides. A more striking detail is the vividly colored, sexy artwork and typography, which is a signature of Universal's visual style.

History shows that video pinball was far from close to replacing pinball machines, but the longevity of the video pinball concept is still very impressive. It remains a marketable product today as shown by TAB Austria's *Virtual Pinball,* released in 2005, which uses a 42" LCD flat panel to display the entire pinball playfield. GR

See thousands of classic arcade flyers at The Arcade Flyer Archive: www.arcadeflyers.com

GameRoom Reviews

Make Your Own Arcade Restoration Artwork

A How-To Guide

by Michael Ford
Published by Classic Arcade Grafix
$29.95 from Classic Arcade Graphics
www.classicarcadegrafix.com

Create Your Own Replacement Art

Every collector will run into the problem of damaged artwork sooner or later—whether through scratches, breakage, sun fade, or just the ravages of time, keeping an arcade machine in good condition will eventually require you to repair or replace some of the art. These are arcade machines, after all—they weren't designed for a long life.

Of course, the second problem you'll encounter is where to find replacement artwork for your machine. There is often replacement art available for the more popular or recent games, but if you've got a vintage woodrail or an ultra-rare prototype game, odds are you're just not going to find what you're looking for from a vendor. Add in the recent legal fights over the reproduction rights for pinball artwork, and getting what you need becomes even that much more difficult.

That's where this book comes in. *Make Your Own Arcade Restoration Artwork: A How-To Guide*, by Michael Ford, is a comprehensive look at the art of restoring arcade artwork. Tips on scanning, vectorizing, and printing your artwork are provided, with plenty of hands-on examples provided using programs such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. Everything from creating marquees to copying sideart is covered, including tips on taking the artwork to your local printer. It's all here, from start to finish, including some unique processes for reproducing and repairing pinball plastics, long one of the tougher artwork parts to reproduce well on a piece-by-piece basis.

It's a fascinating read even beyond the restoration tips: Michael even details the history of his company, Classic Arcade Grafix, and some of the adventures (and misadventures) he's had in restoring arcade artwork. Reading the sometimes painstaking processes required to create a "perfect" reproduction truly gave me a deeper appreciation of what's involved in bringing a machine back to "NIB" status. All in all, if you're into the restoration side of the coin-op hobby, this book is a must. — Kevin Steele

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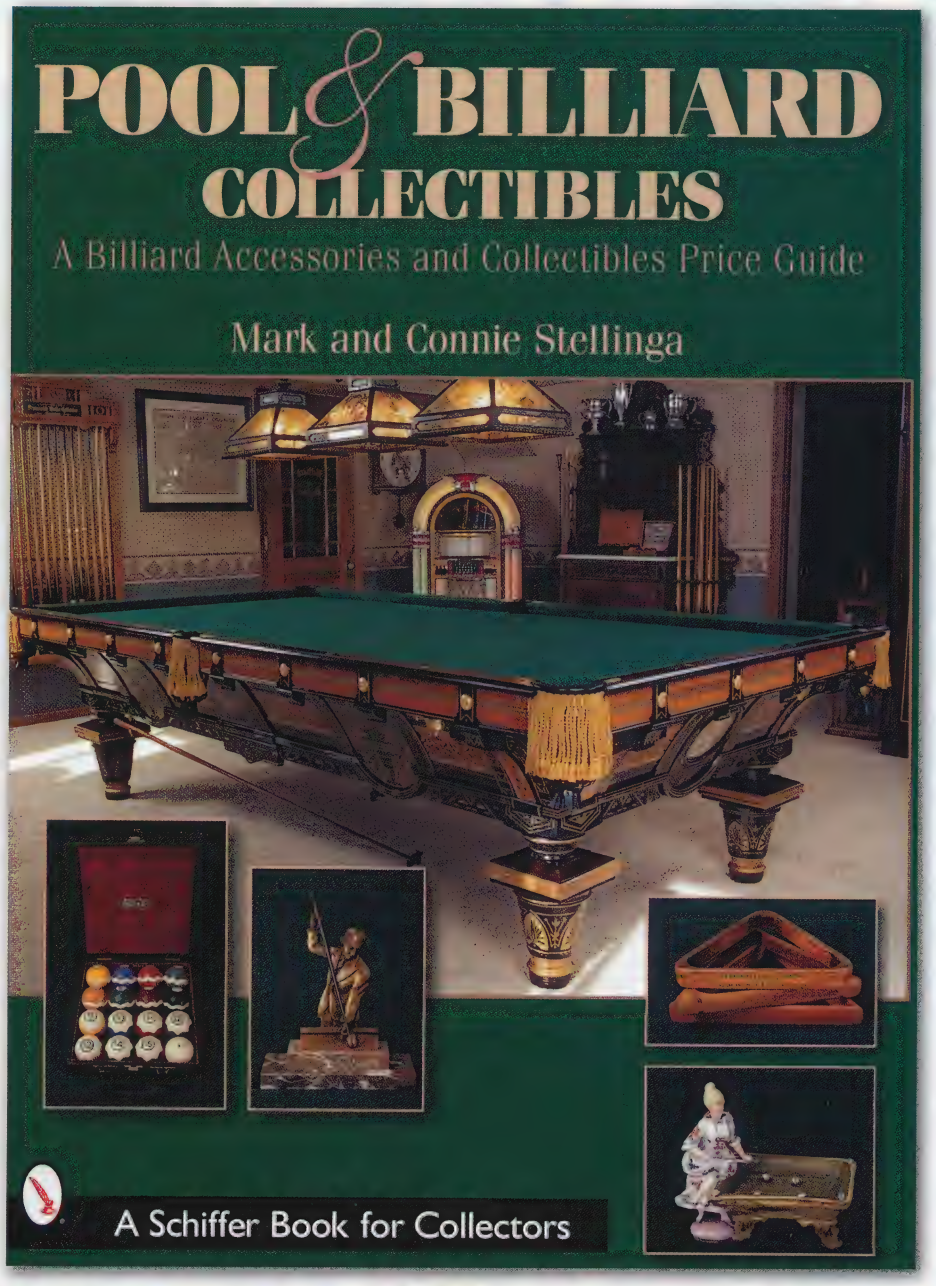
This is one of those "why didn't I think of this" products: small foam discs that can be used to keep the backglass, playfield glass, speaker panel, or practically any other part safe and secure while you're working on a pin. Just place a few discs on a nearby pin (you *do* have more than one pin, right?) and place your glass on top. It'll stay securely in place while you work. You can even stack more discs on top to hold the backglass or speaker panel. Simple, effective, and very handy to have, Douglas Carr has come up with a handy new addition to your pinball toolbox. — Kevin Steele

Pool & Billiard Collectibles

A Billiard Accessories and Collectibles Price Guide

by Marc and Connie Stellinga
Published by Schiffer Books
$69.95 from GameRoom Magazine
www.gameroommagazine.com



Celebrating the History of Pool

A billiards table is, in many ways, one of the very first "gameroom toys." For literally centuries the billiards table has been a central fixutre in the home for people to gather around, play a game, and socialize. In fact, an offshoot of billiards, called "Bagatelle," is credited with being the inspiration for the modern pinball machine.

As you would expect for a game that has been around for hundreds of years, there are a lot of collectibles that have sprung up around the game. This is where *Pool & Billiard Collectibles: A Billiard Accessories and Collectibles Prcie Guide* comes in. This is a very comprehensive look at the field, and the "About This Book" sums it up pretty well:

There has never been another book like this! Over 700 beautiful color photographs display pool and billiard collectibles from the 18th through the early 20th centuries, including balls, ball boxes, cues, ball and cue racks, triangles, scorekeepers, pool & billiard hall chairs and lights, chalks, medals, tokens, trophies, historical photos, prints, posters, matchbox holders, matchsafes, pocket mirrors, advertisements, catalog pages, and much more.

In addition, the text is written by experienced dealers who impart useful tips for newcomers and experience collectors alike. Values for the collectibles are found in the captions. As an added bonus, the final chapter displays a gallery of ninety pool and billiard tables.

This book is equal parts price guide, history book, and coffee table photolog. There are gorgeous photos of all sorts of unique pool-themed accessories, artwork, and more. Even more interesting are some of the vintage ads and magazine articles for pool tables, in everything from Harpers to Scientific American. By the way, in 1876 a good billiard table would run you about $100.

If you're a fan of pool and billiards, or just want to see what a "cutting edge" Victorian-era game room (excuse me, "parlor") looked like, be sure and check out *Pool & Billiard Collectibles.* — Kevin Steele

Move over, "Dogs Playing Poker" — Here's a 1911 postcard featuring "Monkeys Playing Pool"

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Auction Watch

by Tim Ferrante and Scott Voisin

A "Fees"ability Story

On January 4th, millions of ebay loyalists were notified by the company's president, Bill Cobb, that insertion fees and final value fees would be increased on January 29th. For items with a starting bid between $1 and $9.99 the current 35-cent insertion fee would be raised to 40 cents. Final value fees between $25.01 and $1000 would be increased from 3% to 3.25%. It was just seven months ago when Mr. Cobb notified sellers that their eBay store fees were going up. These increases are not subject to debate; you *will* pay them if you market goods on eBay. Some folks would argue that it's just the cost of doing business and that the amounts are insignificant. True, but at what point do "fees" become significant? I'll tell you when—the very moment they're implemented!

Whether it's eBay fees, registration fees, ATM fees or bank balance fees, these "insignificant fees" mount up. For example, on my cable bill I pay a 60-cent Municipal Fee, a 7-cent FCC Fee and a 14-cent State Regulation Fee. That's 81 cents a month I must pay if I want to watch The Sopranos' final season in a couple of months.

Now, I could toss 81 cents out a car window once a month and it won't change a thing in my life. But I'm one of those annoying types who thinks in annual terms when it comes to income and expenses. In my thought process I immediately calculate that I'll be paying $9.72 this year in cable related fees. Not a life-changing sum, but I could certainly use that money for stupid stuff like food.

Here's a few more fun fee facts I deal with. I pay a monthly $6.60 "Residential Customer Charge" to the natural gas company. (A what?) Annually that's another $79.20 down the drain. The cellular phone bill is another laugh riot when it comes to fees. Federal Universal Service Charge (19 cents), Regulatory Charge (5 cents), Administrative Charge (40 cents), 911 System/Emergency Response Fee (90 cents) all totaling $1.54 a month or $18.48 annually. The electric company has a monthly "Customer Charge" of $2.20 ($26.40 annually). There's plenty more, but you get the idea. These small amounts are innocently scattered amongst just my monthly bills and I haven't even paid for the services they're attached to yet! So without much effort I've just tracked $124.08 worth of "insignificant fees" that I will pay this year.

When isolated, a nickel fee here and a dollar fee there seems so trivial. Today, we toss these small amounts around without thinking about them. But the mathematics of money and how it accumulates never changes, only our perception of it does. Fees are a tax and if we really wanted to scare ourselves into tears, calculate what you pay on a yearly basis in just state sales tax.

Taxes, fees, charges -— they can be labeled in any way that makes them less annoying to you. Nevertheless, collectively they're costing us all a small fortune. And eBay has just raised theirs... again. Still, eBay's fees may be a bit more palatable if only due to the fact that you can write them off if you're a business. Or you can try recouping them in other creative ways... you know, like charging a "handling fee."—Tim Ferrante

Coin-Op Auction Results

(Compiled from eBay®)

PINBALL
Centaur $1225
Space Mission $380
Pirates of the Caribbean $4299
Cyclone $1250
Terminator 2 $1900
El Dorado $1450
Joust $5700
South Park $2475
Skylab $450
Pioneer $450
Gorgar $920
Cirqus Voltaire $2950
Asteroid Annie and the Aliens $1200
Nitro Ground Shaker $795
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles $1155
Taxi $835
Sound Stage $535
Wipe Out $1025
Star Trek: The Next Generation $1725

ARCADE VIDEO
Centipede $590
Ms. Pac-Man/Galaga combo $1200
Donkey Kong Junior $430
Donkey Kong $400
Tron $600
Defender 2 $406
Robotron $500
Quantum $1800
Black Widow $404
Virtua Fighter $470
Defender $513
Killer Instinct 2 $850
2005 Golden Tee $1550
Lethal Enforcers $252
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles $632
Die Hard $301
Galaga '88 $562
Big Buck Hunter $650
WWF Royal Rumble $300
Indy 500 $405

JUKEBOXES
Wurlitzer 2150 $1995
Seeburg J $1400
Wurlitzer 2800 $1949
Seeburg 146M $1481
Wurlitzer 1015 $7900
Seeburg 100R $1899
Wurlitzer 1800 $2190
Rock-Ola 1442 $1136
Wurlitzer 1100 $2000

SODA
Coke Vendo 110 $1005
Coke Westinghouse WB78 $500
Coke Vendo 56 $1150
7Up Ideal 55 slider $250
Pepsi Ideal 55B slider $292

GUMBALL
Samco 5-cent $250
Oak Acorn 10-cent $42
Silver King 1-cent $100
Master 1-cent $406
Columbus 1-cent $400

SLOTS
Mills Token Bell 5-cent $2500
Jennings Chief 25-cent $3300
Mills Owl 5-cent $1200
Jennings Silent Salesman 5-cent $3528
Mills Black Beauty 5-cent $902
Jennings Standard Chief 5-cent $1250
Mills Bursting Cherry 5-cent $1550
Mills Castle Front 25-cent $2150
Mills Golden Nugget 25-cent $1450

PAPER
Sega South Park repair man. $10
Williams Indiana Jones flyer $10
Data East Star Wars flyer $16
Sega Thunder Blade manual $8
Classic Soda price guide $25

COIN-OP
Gem 5-cent vendor $936
Big Top Disney vendor $290
Zeno 1-cent gum vendor- $550
Gottlieb strength tester $406
Amusement Ent. Pitchem $538

FIXER-UPPERS
Williams Flash $250
Bally Star Trek $285
Sega Buck Rogers $200
Wurlitzer 616 $515
Coke Vendo 39 $450

NO TAKERS
Atari Pole Position $399
Atari Star Wars $1000
Wurlitzer 1015 $9495
Seeburg M100B $2500
Mills Horse Head 25-cent $3250
Jennings Little Duke 1-cent- $2495
Grapette Vendo 56 $699
Pepsi VMC110 $4000

The Money Genie is out of the bottle:

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Why is your warehouse exploding with older non-revenue producing equipment in the first place? Most operators will have to think about that question. Some will say they've always done this and soon end up with warehouses busting at the seams. Others feared years ago buyers would buy their equipment, then turn around and steal their locations. But ask yourself: Is that money sitting idle in your warehouse while you wait for the best time to sell? Well, now is that time!

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*minimum quantity required

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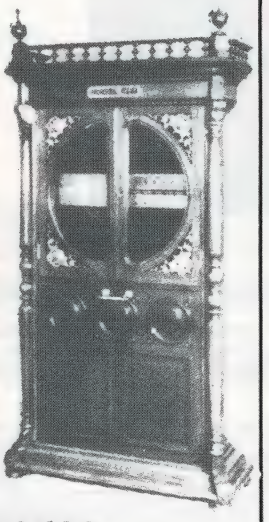

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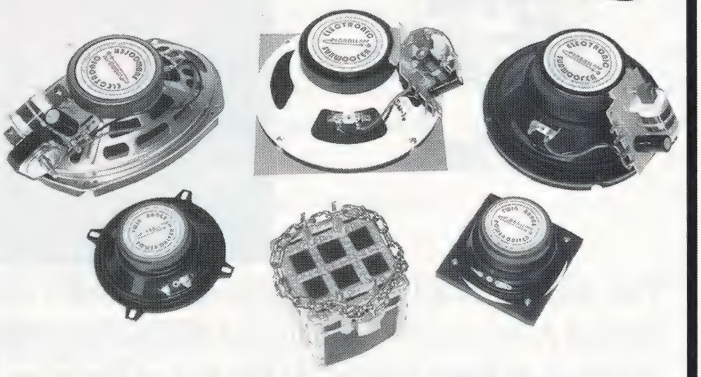

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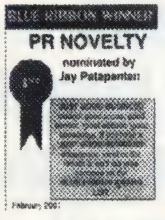

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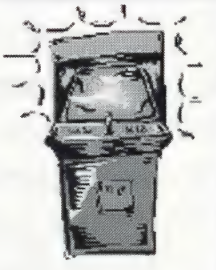

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The World Pinball Player Rankings are based on tournaments endorsed by the International Flipper Pinball Association from around the world. Points are awarded according to the players' finishing positions at these events. At the end of the calendar year, the player with the most WPPR points will be crowned the "World's Greatest Pinball Player" by the IFPA. Any questions, please contact the IFPA at ifpapinball@gmail.com.

Latest Rankings (as of 1/1/2007)

1	Keith Elwin	466.8
2	Lyman Sheats	306.8
3	Chris Newsom	254.1
4	Josh Sharpe	252.4
5	Trent Augenstein	231.7
6	Neil Shatz	211.3
7	Bowen Kerins	211.1
8	Zach Sharpe	207.7
9	Jim Belsito	177.8
10	Mats Runsten	177.1
11	Fredrik Lindberg	175.1
12	Jörgen Holm	153.8
13	Donavan Stepp	148.1
14	Jorian Engelbrektsson	110.1
15	Andy Rosa	107.6
16	Roy Wils	101.1
17	Eden Stamm	97.5
18	John Miller	95.3
19	Paul Madison	94.8
20	Michael Lindström	88.7
21	Patrik Bodin	87.3
22	Per Holknekt	85.3
23	Stefan Andersson	79.1
24	Derek Fugate	75.9
25	Albert Medaillon	71.5

December 2006 Tournament Winners

Houston Area Arcade Group

Chris Newsom, Tony Rodreigez, Eric Fisher, Kevin Plaivech, Chrstine Fisher, John Costa, Tim Maleck, Kamees Plaivech, Pete Christian, Tony Sisson, Mark Ros

Lyons Classic Pinball Tournament

Ken Lewis

Stockholm Pinballs Månadstävling

Jorian Engelbrektsson

Brazilian Pinball Tournament

Sandro Coimbra. Kleber Calonio, Mit Shibazaki, Francisco, Mario Canongia, De Paula, Fernando De Jesus, Marcos, Juba Paulo Freitas, Marcelo Lima, Rogério Scorza

VRPA Xmas Bash

Eden Stamm, Kyle Seller, Angelo Muro, Jeff Morris, Dale Garbutt, Molly Reisman, Raymond Chau, Warren McCulloch

*** FINAL 2006 STANDINGS ***

World's Greatest Pinball Player 2006

KEITH ELWIN

Congrats to Keith Elwin, WPPR 2006 World Pinball Champion, from GameRoom Magazine!

This Just In:
A New Gravitar Record!

25th Anniversary

1981-2006

The wheels of history are always turning, with new records surfacing on the old arcade cabinets every so many days or weeks. Just as this list of scores was being finished, a major achievement was verified by a representative of Twin Galaxies. Dan Coogan, of Phoenix, AZ, logged 8,029,450 points on the Gravitar arcade game on December 23, 2006. This breaks the 4,722,200 point world record set by Raymond Mueller, of Boulder, CO, on December 04, 1982. — Walter Day, President, Twin Galaxies TwinGalaxies.com

Spy Hunter	9,512,590	Paul Dean	Riverside, CA	6/28/85
Star Force	134,200	Cristiano Ferrucci	Faenza, Italy	5/27/85
Strider	365,810	Jason Wilson	Anaheim, CA	2/15/98
Strikers 1945 III	610,000	Joseph Cho	Unknown	5/11/99
Super Contra	10,640,310	Martin Alessi	Unknown	6/11/87
Super Dodge Ball	2,105,500	Stephan Gore	Austin, TX	1-Jun-87
Super Hang On	39,381,040	Mark Twitty	Garden Grove, CA	6/11/04
Super Missile Attack	215,520	John Zabel	Hebron, CT	11/3/04
The End (Stern)	47,080	Perry Rodgers	Redmond, WA	6/11/04
The House of the Dead II	89,950	Derick Kim	Stanton, CA	6/26/00
The House of the Dead III	149,974	JC- Padilla	Orlando, FL	3/17/03
The Ninja Warriors	188,900	Brian Chapel	Mesa, AZ	11/10/88
The Real Ghostbusters	218,300	Brian Kuh	Hoboken, NJ	06/01/06
The Tin Star	107,600	Shaun Cram	S.Berwick, ME	11/19/06
Thief	9,456,120	Mike Ziara	Salisbury, MD	04/25/83
Thunder Blade	6,482,810	Steve Ryno	California	06/11/04
Time Crisis 2	1,712,400	Dennis Blechner	Kassel, Germany	05/03/01
Time Crisis 3	1,631,630	St Lazare, PQ, Canada	Martin Bedard	11/15/04
Time Pilot	15,000,000	Upland, CA	Jeff Peters	09/25/85
Time Pilot ' 84	463,300	Samantha Johanik	Des Moines, IA	06/28/86
Tournament Arkanoid	1,730,320	Zachary Hample	New York, NY	03/02/02
Tron	7,148,220	David Cruz	Brandon, FL	06/02/06
Turbo Sub	12,143,500	Dwayne Richard	Grande Prairie, AB, Canada	12/04/05
Turkey Shoot	2,358,550	Jeff Peters	Upland, CA	05/05/87
Turtles	65,000	Dwayne Richard	Grande Prairie, AB, Canada	12/31/02
Tutankham	622,040	Rob Barrett	Medford, OR	07/25/03
Twin Cobra	1,900,450	Greg Sakundiak	Saskatoon, SK, Canada	06/12/03
TX-1	277,400	David Palmer	Citrus Heights, CA	10/02/84
U.N. Squadron	1,960,400	Dwayne Richard	Grande Prairie, AB, Canada	06/11/04
Vastar	1,698,530	Michele Cassaniti	Fidenza, Italy	06/24/84
Vertigo	595,028	Donn Nauert	Thousand Oaks, CA	06/28/86
Victory Road	1,321,020	Stan Cejka	Austin, TX	03/10/87
VS. Dr. Mario	899,400	Stephen Krogman	Boca Raton, FL	01/01/92
Vs. Duck Hunt	1,033,300	Randy lawton	Weirs Beach, NH	06/02/00
Vs. Excitebike	398,730	James Hillard	Upland, CA	06/11/04
Vs. Super Mario Bros.	216,900	Jason Wilson	Anaheim, CA	6/27/02
Warlords	911,875	Peter Skahill	Los Angeles, CA	08/29/82
X Men	830	Bill Toups	Springfield, MO	04/20/97
XX Mission	1,565,300	David Prueitt	United kingdom	07/21/87
Zarzon	48,720	Steve Weirzbecki	Kenosha, WI	01/16/82

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The Last Word

by Kevin Steele

Why Keep Playing?

The entire coin-op gaming industry is built around one central idea: keep 'em coming back for more. Getting repeat plays was always critical to the coin-op industry, and while they took an unfortunate shortcut in using "continues," the lifeblood of coin-op gaming has always been about getting people to come back and try again.

So, with an entire industry built around the idea of repeat plays, how do you get players to want to try again? Well, obviously, you need a good game first, something that is fun to play, and something that is challenging but fair. Williams mastered this aspect early, with classics such as *Defender* and *Robotron: 2084*. These were games that were positively intimidating, and your first game was probably measured in tens of seconds.

It was a humiliating experience, and yet you realized at the same time that the game had not "cheated," or thrown anything at you that was unfair. Robotron: 2084 starts each level with all enemies on-screen—you can see what you're up against, and you have the chance (however slim) of defeating everything coming at you.

Larry DeMar, co-creator of these two games, confessed once in an interview that they wanted these games to "kick your butt" the first time you played them, and that a good game had to do this to be successful. And you know what? He's right! If a game isn't seen as a challenge, why come back to face it again? Players need and want that intimidation, a virtual "glove slap" across the face that says "I challenge you."

With any good movie, a hero needs a quest and a villain. A good game provides both, even if the game itself plays both roles. Defeating the game is a challenge that, if designed correctly, is something that is almost, but not quite, outside of the player's skills. It shouldn't be easy, but it should be possible.

So, once a player has "beaten" a game, or gotten a high score, why play anymore? What good are these new-found skills? To publicly best other players, of course. Everyone wants validation for their achievements, and the arcade high-score charts are just the first step. It's great to get your initials on a game, but it's only the first taste of glory. What keeps players coming back again and again, ultimately, is the ability to test their skills against other human players, and gain public recognition of their gaming prowess. What good is it if you're the best Defender player in the world if no one knows?

This is where tournaments and local competitions come in. Defeating a game is fun, but doing it in public, with an audience, is positively addictive. It adds an entirely new level to the challenge, and even if you're not directly facing off against another player, competition is just what the industry needs to inspire repeated game plays. Even if you're not the champion (yet), you're going to keep coming back to a game, again and again, if you think that glory is within your grasp.

Humans are social creatures, and solo competition against a game only entertains for so long. In the end, we need the challenge of facing others.

Every game room pastime seemingly has a tournament these days: poker, pool, darts—all of these gaiming mainstays have public competitions, sometimes for millions of dollars. Why not pinball and classic video games? Networking these games across the Internet with "tournament" modes (as Stern has done with their pinball machines, and Incredible Technologies has done with the *Golden Tee* games) was a good first step, but ultimately, it still needs something more.

Humans are social creatures, and solo competition against a game only entertains for so long. In the end, we need the challenge of facing other players, and a face-to-face competition is something that even the modern online gaming industry has discovered is an essential part of a game's success. It's not enough to defeat a disembodied challenger across the Internet—for it to be a truly satisfying challenge, you need to be able to look into your opponent's eyes.

Even the newest PC online first person shooters are now organizing tournaments, and there are players who actually make their living playing in these tournaments. And there are some promising starts in this area with arcade games, such as Incredible Technologies, which does sponsor annual Golden Tee championships. With all of these precedents, why is the coin-op industry so slow in setting up and sponsoring local game tournaments? Nothing inspires players more than seeing another player crowned champion, especially if there's money involved. What better motivation to keep improving your skills (and pumping money into a machine) than knowing that there's a chance for fame, glory, and money (no matter how slim)? Sponsorship of local competitions (such as those organized by Twin Galaxies), with real cash prizes, might just be the "spark" that invigorates the industry.

Arcade games need a reason to exist, they need to have something to offer that cannot easily be replicated in the home. If this sounds a bit out of place in a magazine devoted to the home game room, remember that all of these fun toys we have in our game rooms were developed first in the arcade.

Human interaction and face-to-face competition is something that is best done in a public venue, and a good competition or tournament is something that can inspire players to not only come out and play frequently, but perhaps even buy new coin-op games to practice on in their own homes. And what coin-op vendor wouldn't drool over that? GR

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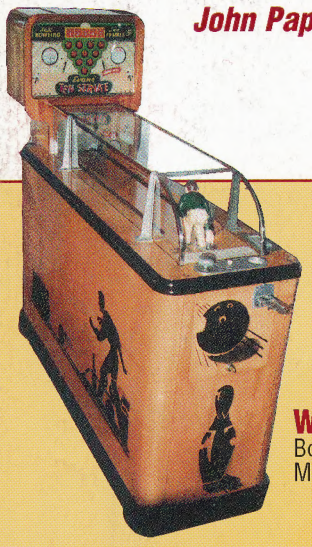

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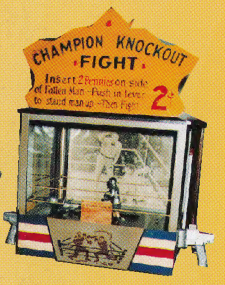

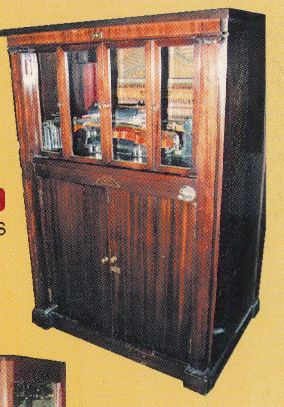

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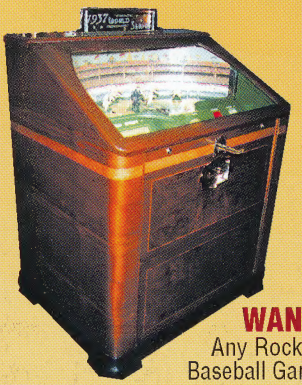

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